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Christopher P. Atwood

University of Pennsylvania, catwood@sas.upenn.edu

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At the time of publication, author Christopher P. Atwood was affiliated with Indiana University. Currently, he is a faculty member in the East Asian Languages and Civilizations Department at the University of Pennsylvania.

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Comments

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THE FIRST MONGOL CONTACTS WITH THE TIBETANS¹

Christopher P. Atwood

Introduction

Since the thirteenth century, the “Mongolia-Tibet interface” (Bulag and Diemberger 2007) has been a vital factor in shaping Inner Asian civilization. Brought into being by the Mongol extension of their political control and settlement to the Tibetan plateau, and by the Mongolian acceptance of Tibetan Buddhism as their dominant religion, this interface created a broad zone of a “greater Tibetan cultural community” (in Gray Tuttle’s phrase) and Mongolian khanates (Sperling 2012) that stretched from the southern foothills of the Himalayas to lake Baykal in southern Siberia and beyond. Needless to say, historians both traditional and modern have paid considerable attention to the origin of the politico-religious interface between the Tibetan and Mongolian people. Since the seventeenth century, traditional Inner Asian historians have envisioned this interface partly in terms of the origin of the Mongol royal family from that of the primal Indian Buddhist monarch, Mahasammata, via Tibet and a continuous sequence of “priests and patrons” from the time of Chinggis Khan onward.

The twentieth-century rediscovery of the *Secret History of the Mongols* revealed the late and fabricated nature of any connection between the ancestors of the Mongol khans and the lineage of the Tibetan monarchs, let alone that of the Mahasammata. Likewise Turrell Wylie’s seminal article in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (1977) demonstrated that the first Mongol prince to have any demonstrable contact with Central Tibetan hierarchs was Chinggis Khan’s grandson Kōten² (Tibetan Go-dan) in 1240 and that such contact did not become significant in Mongolian religio-political history before the time of Möngke Qa’an, another of Chinggis Khan’s grandsons, who reigned 1251-59. The supposed priest-patron relation between Chinggis Khan and Kun-dga’ sNying-po of the Sa-skya order was likewise shown to be a late fabrication with no historical reality.

Subsequently, Elliot Sperling (1987, 1994) and Ruth Dunnell (1992) showed that not only was the Mongol link to the Tibetan Buddhists hierarchies rather later than seen in the traditional chronicles, but it was also dependent on previous connection of the Tangut Xia 夏 dynasty

1 It is a great pleasure to present this work as an homage to Elliot Sperling, a mentor, colleague and friend, and one of the pioneers in the scholarly study of the Tibetan relations with China and Mongolia. I would also like to thank Eveline S. Yang and Stephen Haw for the assistance they provided in writing this paper, particularly in supplying me references and materials while working on the draft in Inner Mongolia in June and July, 2014.

2 It should be noted that both the Persian spellings and the modern cognates of this name make it absolutely indisputable that the correct Mongolian reading is Kōten with a *t* and not Kōden with a *d*. Chinese transcriptions commonly de-aspirate non-initial Mongolian consonants (thus transcribing *ba’atur* as *bādū* 拔都) but such merely transcriptional variants do not affect the correct Mongolian spelling. This and other issues of transcription will be discussed in my commentary on the *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, currently in preparation.

kings with the Tibetan hierarchs, particularly in the bKa-brgyud religious lineage. The Mongols evidently derived their early knowledge of Central Tibet from the Tangut rulers, whose kingdom Chinggis Khan destroyed in 1227. As Sperling argued, Prince Köten's dispatch of his *noyan* (commander) Dorda Darqan to Central Tibet to demand that Tibetans there send representatives to his princely appanage can be seen as an attempt to take over the Xia- bKa-brgyud religious linkage and reuse it for Mongol purposes.

Yet Dorda Darqan's 1240 expedition was not in fact the first example of Mongol-Tibetan connections. As Stephen Haw (2014) has recently shown, Mongols had come into contact with and were aware of ethnic Tibetans in the Amdo area well before that time, and indeed even during the life of Chinggis Khan. These connections were indeed related to the Mongol interaction with the Xia dynasty, but had no direct connection to known hierarchs of Tibetan Buddhism, or indeed to religious institutions at all. Instead, the early Mongol connections with Amdo Tibetans first began in the same way Mongol connections with western Central and Inner Asia first began: a series of cascading events produced as political refugees fled the Mongol conquests and sought to rebuild their dominion further away. These events thus underline how the idea that early Mongol interest in Tibetans and Tibet was purely religious is the product of Tibetan hagiographies and does not correspond at all to how the Mongols saw these emerging links.

Ilqa Senggün and the “Böri Tibetans”

The earliest reliable evidence of ethnic Mongol links with ethnic Tibetans is found in the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* 聖武親征錄. This passage is also found, albeit with some expansionistic touches, in the Persian text of the historian Rashid al-Din in his *Compendium of Chronicles*. The Chinese and the Persian were certainly derived from a single Mongolian text. The origin and nature of the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* 聖武親征錄 and its Mongolian original has occasioned much controversy, but my research, to be published in a forthcoming critical edition with translation and commentary, has shown that the Chinese text was put together by an anonymous editor sometime after 1303 and sometime before 1320. This anonymous editor took the *Veritable Records* (*Shilu* 太祖實錄) of the first six emperors of the Yuan dynasty from Chinggis Khan (c. 1162-1227) to Qubilai Qa'an (1215-1294)³ and abridged them into two *juan*. Later, the Chinese scholar Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 incorporated the first *juan*, covering Chinggis Khan and Ögedei Qa'an's reigns, into his *Shuofu* 說郛 anthology, naming it the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* 聖武親征錄 “Record of the Imperial Conquests of Chinggis Khan.”⁴

3 These six emperors include Chinggis Khan, Ögedei Qa'an, Tolui Khan, Güyüg Qa'an, Möngke Qa'an, and Qubilai Qa'an. Although Tolui did not actually rule, as the father of Möngke and Qubilai, he was also considered an emperor and received a *Veritable Record*. See Xie 2013: 393-96, 412-13.

4 This name was a combination of the two names of the separate *juan*, which are recorded in a Ming-era catalogue as 1) *Huang Yuan Taizu Shengwu kaitian ji* 皇元太祖聖武開天記 “Record of How Chinggis Khan, Great Founder of the Sovereign Yuan Dynasty, Initiated the State” and 2) *Qinzheng lu* 親征錄 “Record of the Imperial Conquests,” respectively. The second is said to have been mostly about conquests under Qubilai Qa'an's reign.

Comparison of this *Shengwu qinzheng lu* 聖武親征錄 with the first chapter (*juan* 卷) of the *Yuan shi* 元史 and with the free Persian translation comprising the bulk of Rashid al-Din's "Annals of Chinggis Khan" in his *Compendium of Chronicles* shows that the now lost *Veritable Record of Chinggis Khan* (*Taizu shilu* 太祖實錄) were preserved virtually complete and verbatim in the Chinese *Shengwu qinzheng lu* 聖武親征錄. Internal evidence shows this *Veritable Record of Chinggis Khan* was compiled mostly sometime between 1266 and 1279. The record was composed in a bilingual edition, but with the Mongolian language as primary.

In my source-critical commentary to the work, however, I have identity the passage in question as part of an earlier narrative of how Chinggis Khan conquered the Kereyid kingdom, one written in the time of Ögedei Qa'an, and used by both the *Secret History of the Mongols* and by the *Veritable Records*, as well as being cited directly in Persian translation in some manuscripts of Rashid al-Din's *Compendium of Chronicles*. Thus the datum may be considered to ultimately derive from a Mongolian language text written in the 1230s.

This text, after describing how Chinggis Khan overthrew Ong Khan, ruler of the Kereyid kingdom in central Mongolia (autumn, 1203), continues to describe how his son Ilqa Senggün⁵ fled first south and then west. Using the Chinese and the Persian to reconstruct the Mongolian, a translation of the original Mongolian would be roughly as follows:

Ilqa fled to the Tangut Kingdom, passing by Isina city⁶ and arriving at the Böri Tibetans. Having plundered them, he still wished to live there. The Tibetans gathered their peoples⁷ and drove him out. Scattering, he fled to the land of the Cherkesmen of Küsen city among the Sarta'ul,⁸ and was killed by one Qilinch-Qara.⁹

In other words, Ilqa Senggün was fleeing from Central Mongolia southwest to the Tangut kingdom, which he entered at the Tanguts' northwestern frontier city of Idzina (Middle Mongolian Isina, modern Ejina) in far western Inner Mongolia. He then must have been received by the Xia authorities and given some form of assistance before attempting to rebuild his base among the Böri Tibetans (*Boli Tufan* 波黎吐蕃), by must be meant pastoralist Tibetans in Amdo.

5 In Chinese transcription of the *Secret History of the Mongols*, his name is read as Nilqa Senggüm. The variation between Senggün and Senggüm is one within the original Mongolian, but "Nilqa" is simply a misreading by the Ming-era transcribers of the unpointed Mongolian AILQ-A as NILQ-A.

6 Isina is the Middle Mongolian of the Tangut Idzina ("Black River") and equivalent to the modern Ejina Banner in far western Inner Mongolia. Isina city is the ruins of Khar-Khot ("Black City") or *Heishui cheng* 黑水城. On the Tangut name see Kara 2003: 40.

7 The Chinese here speaks of "tribes" (*bu* 部) and "tribal followings" (*buzhong* 部衆), but as I have shown, Middle Mongolian had no term comparable to "tribe" so it must have been introduced into the Chinese translation. There is no parallel in the Persian. See Atwood 2010.

8 Present-day Kuča (Kuqa) in Xinjiang. Mongolian *Sarta'ul* is translated into Chinese as "The West" (*xī yù* 西域), a word designating all the lands and peoples of Muslim Central Asia and the Middle East. Rashid al-Din usually has "Tajik" in the corresponding places. Cherkesmen may be the nomads in the Tianshan mountains north of Kūča.

9 This is §27.4 in my forthcoming edition; cf. Jia [1979]: 127r-128v and Wang [1926] 1962: 64v-65r (134-35). Chinese text: 亦剌合走西夏，過亦即納城，至波黎·吐蕃部，既討掠，且欲居之，吐蕃收集部衆逐之，散走西域曲先城，徹兒哥思蠻之地，為黑隣赤·哈刺者殺之。

But this attempt was unsuccessful and he fled west to Küsen (present-day Kuča, also spelled on modern atlases as Kuqa), one of the Turkestani cities of the Tarim Basin. The Cherkemen may be another mobile pastoralist people, perhaps living in the Kaidu valley of the Tianshan Mountains north of Kuča; this area has long been a major center of nomadic inhabitation. While in that area, he was killed by the local ruler, Qilinch-Qara. Rashid al-Din's parallel expands this text as follows, incorporating evidence of uncertain provenance: "An emir from among the emirs of the Qalaj tribe, named Qilij-Qarā, who was the emir and governor of that place, captured and killed him. They say that after that this emir sent the wife and child of Seng'ün, whom he had seized, in bonds to Chinggiz Khan, and he submitted and joined him." The Qalaj are a Turkic-speaking ethnic group, a remnant of whom are found today near Tehran, speaking an unusually archaic Turkic language. Exactly how a Qalaj emir ended up ruling Kuča, and how these Cherkemen were related to Kuča are both unclear, but Ilqa Senggün's execution and the handing of his family over to Chinggiz Khan were probably related to the break-up of the Qara-Khitay realm in 1215-1218, of which Kuča was a tributary city. During this break-up many tributary rulers sought to ingratiate themselves with the rising Mongols by handing over fugitives from his unification of Mongolia.

Returning to Ilqa and the Böri Tibetans, that he was initially harbored by the Xia dynasty appears from a note in the *Yuan shi*, explaining Chinggiz Khan's casus belli against the Tanguts.

In year 21, [A.D. 1226], in spring, first moon, since the Western Xia had harbored the enemy Ilaqa Senggün 亦臘喝翔昆 and not delivered hostages, the emperor personal took command of a punitive expedition against them.¹⁰

It is thus confirmed that between his entry into the Tangut Kingdom and his adventure among the Tibetans, that he had been assisted by the Xia. This assistance would in turn make it virtually certain that his subsequent activities among the Tibetans had the blessing of the Xia rulers. This likelihood is enhanced by the fact that the Kereyids were long-standing allies of the Tangut kingdom. Earlier, the Kereyid king Ong Khan, when attacked by rivals at least twice took refuge among the Xia, who also permitted him to move on either further west or back to Mongolia, when it suited him. Likewise, when Ong Khan's brother, Ja'a Gambo, was in trouble he too took refuge at the Xia court, where he received at least his title *gambo*, which is Tangut in origin, and perhaps his personal name Ja'a as well. (Rashid al-Din claims that his original personal name was Kereyidei and Ja'a Gambo was a name he assumed only during his stay in the Xia kingdom.)¹¹

¹⁰ *YS* 1.23: 二十一年，春正月，帝以西夏納仇人亦臘喝翔昆及不遣質子，自將伐之。

¹¹ In a recent reading of the Tangut text, "Song of the Lawgiving Might Pacifying the Barbarians" (Liang and Yang 2008), it has been argued that the reference to a western "barbarian" ruler Ya-lyi-thay (Chinese *Yiyantai* 亦延台) giving his daughter to a prince in the Tangut royal family refers to Ja'a Gambo marrying his daughter to the Tanguts. However, the authors' argument crucially depends on assuming that when Rashid al-Din says Ja'a Gambo married his daughter to the Öng'üt prince, Öng'üt here is actually the same as Tangut (!), and that Ya-lyi-thay is also "very close" (!) to Kereyidei in pronunciation. Neither argument can be sustained. Further research is certainly needed, but Ya-lyi-thay may perhaps be a Tangut

The term “Böri Tibetans” or *Böri Töbed* in Mongolian combines the Turkic *böri* “wolf” with the old Turkic-era ethnonym *Töbed* meaning “Tibetan.”¹² Who exactly these *Böri Töbed* were is unclear, but the term appears to have encompassed a fairly large number of Tibetans, rather than only a small group, judging from how Plano Carpini uses it along side a number of ethnonyms.¹³ Wolves were of course important symbols of political power among Tibeto-Mongol rulers, being conceived of both as ancestors and used as battle standards. Given the Turkic origin of the term *böri*, it is not unlikely that this term derived from the Yellow Uyghurs (*Sarigh Uyghur*), who were Turkic speakers then forming a large part of the Kökenuur pastoralist population. It is perhaps significant that in Dunhuang poetry, the Tibetans are referred to once as “wolf aliens” (*langfan* 狼蕃) (Wen 2014).

Following Haw (2014: 40), I believe these “Böri Tibetans” are to be identified with the Bi-ri who appear occasionally in Tibetan sources. These in turn, I identify in a more qualified fashion with the Biri myriarchy or chiliarchy of later Yuan and Ming Chinese records. The Bi-ri appear in Tibetan sources already used by Giuseppe Tucci and Luciano Petech. In some sources, they appear in writings from Central Tibet as fierce raiders allied with the Mongols in the 1250s (Petech 1990: 13). In the famed letter of Sa-skya Pandita supposedly sent back to Tibet after he met Prince Köten, he refers to the Bi-ri as a kind of fourth division of Tibetans, alongside mNga-ris (western Tibet), dBus (east-central Tibet), and gTsang (west-central Tibet); Sa-skya Pandita claims that he brought a body them as well into tribute-relations with the Mongols (Tucci 1949: 10-11; Petech 1990: 8).¹⁴ These references make most sense if “Bi-ri” had a sense roughly equal to that of Amdo Tibetans, or nomad Amdowas. When Sa-skya Pandita was summoned to the Mongol court in 1240, he would have had to pass through nomadic Amdo territories and he and his Mongol escort would have interacted with their leaders.

Eventually, the Mongol Yuan court created two administrative units with the name Biri in it: a myriarchy (Chinese *Bili wanhufu* 必里萬戶府) around what is present-day Khri-ka (Chinese Guide 貴德) county in Qinghai province and a chiliarchy or command of a thousand called the Biri Chiliarchy (Chinese *Bili qianhusuo* 必里千戶所) somewhere in the area of present-day

version of the Kitan imperial surname Yelü 耶律, with the Mongolic suffix -tai. (Note that the authors’ reconstruction of the Tangut name is actually Ja-lji-thsj, but given the Chinese version, I have assumed that j here represents “y” and that “s” is typographical error for a.) In that case the “western barbarians” would be the Qara-Khitay.

12 The Chinese text has *Boli Tufan* 波黎吐蕃 and Rashid al-Din’s Persian has *Būrī Tabat*. The Persian translation establishes that *Tufan* 吐蕃 was a translation of Mongolian *Töbed* “Tibetan.” As Haw (2014: 41-42) shows, the distinction drawn by Petech, whereby *Tufan* meant the Amdo area and *Xifan* meant the Khams area, is not valid for Yuan-era sources. In reality, both are more or less equivalent to each other and to “Tibet,” as used in Western languages.

13 See his Burithabet in Dawson [1955]: 23, 41 (chapters 5 and 7).

14 As Tucci (1949: 251 n. 31) points out, the name alternates between Be-ri and Bi-ri. Given the form in the letter of Sa-skya Pandita and the Chinese references to the Biri Chiliarchy, Biri would seem to be the correct form. I believe Beri appears due to a confusion of later scribes with the more prominent Beri Monastery of the Khams region, near De-dge. This is, however, far too southern to have anything to do with the word in question here.

Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan.¹⁵ In the transition to the Ming, the Biri Myriarchy was continued and renamed the Biri Guard Chiliarchy (*Bili Wei qianhusuo* 必里衛千戶所). The seal of the chiliarch is preserved in the Khri-ka/Guide county museum.¹⁶ The presence of this name in two separate regions confirms that originally Bi-ri or Böri had a fairly general signification, which later Mongol Yuan administrative usage narrowed, just as Roman administration narrowed the meaning of “Africa” to just the area of Tunisia and “Asia” to just the area of eastern Anatolia on the Aegean Sea.

In this identification, it is impossible without further research to say for sure whether Biri is the original and Böri a Tuco-Mongolian distortion, or whether Biri is a Tibetan version of Turco-Mongolian Böri “wolf.” But it is significant that the Wanli-era *Da Ming huidian* 大明會典 has a note that Biri was called *Wuli* 兀里 in the “old” *Huidian*.¹⁷ This would suggest an alternative form of the name as Uri or Wuri. If it is to be read as the latter, it could be a version of Turco-Mongolian *Būri*. If we assume that the nomads of Amdo had the same reputation in the twelfth-thirteenth century as they did in the nineteenth-twentieth centuries, as fearless and incessant bandits, it would be easy to see how they could end up being called “Wolf” Tibetans, most likely by a corruption of their designation as *Biri* or *Wuri*.

Tibetans were hardly the only pastoralists in the Amdo region, however. In the late eleventh century, travelers journeying west to east along the southern border of the Xia empire found the following peoples: 1) the “Yellow-Head (*Sarigh-Bash*) Uyghurs” (*Huangtou Weiwu’r* 黃頭畏兀兒); 2) the “Straw-Head Tatars” (*Caotou Dada* 草頭達鞑); 3) the Chong’ul 種樞 (a Turkic clan name still found among the modern Yogurs)¹⁸; 4) and the finally the Tibetan realm of Tsong-kha under Don-chen (*Dongzhan* 董氈).¹⁹ It is likely that all of these groups were still existing in Ilqa Senggün’s time. The term Tatar should indicate Mongolic speakers and some Uyghurs, at least, had connections with the Kereyids and were to achieve high position in the Mongol empire.

15 YS 87.2197. In this citation, the myriarchy was misread as Bicheng 必呈, but *cheng* 呈 must be a mistake for *li* 里.

16 See *MSL*, *Taizu* 太祖, 69.1292, and *Taizong* 太宗 20A.356; *DMHD*, chapter *wei* 衛, 1791-1; *MS* 80.1949, 90.2222, 330.8541, 8551, 331.8580, 8588. On the seal in the museum, I would like to thank Eveline S. Yang for kindly informing me of this and supplying me with a scan of the museum pamphlet (email, July 15, 2014).

17 This “old” *Huidian* should be one of the previous editions, from the Chinghua, Zhengde, or Jiajing era compilations.

18 The Chung’ul are found in three contexts, which have not yet been viewed in a unified way by scholarship. First they are the “Chuyue” 處月 (Tang transcription value Ch’u-ngul; see Coblin 1994: §§0113, 0734) of accounts of the Western Türk empire, e.g. Du You 1998: 199.5452, 5456, 5459, 5460. Second they are the Ju-ngul and “Zhongyun” 仲雲 (late Tang transcription value Jung-ün for Jung-ül, cf. Coblin 1994: §§1156, 0862) of Tibetan and Chinese Dunhuang documents from the ninth-tenth centuries (see Hamilton 1977, Ren Xiaobo 2013). Finally they are the Chung’ül clan of the Yaghlaqar *otog* of the present-day Yogur nationality in Gansu (Saguchi 1986, p.19).

19 See Yang 1994, pp.97-101, citing the Yuanfeng 元豐 4 and 6 (1081, 1083) itineraries of envoys from the west who were passing south of Xia-controlled territory given in the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編 and *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿; cf. SS 490.14.109. On Don-chen and his family, see Petech 1983, p.178.

Given these choices, it is rather surprising that Ilqa Senggün sought allies among Tibetans, rather than the ethnically more allied Uyghurs and Tatars. How to explain this?

At the time of Ilqa Senggün's flight, the Tibetans of this region were dominated by two powerful hereditary families that had risen to power by skillfully playing off the Jin, Xia, and Song dynasties, all of whom actively sought support among them. One was the Zhao 趙 family, who from Dading 大定 9 (1169) served the Jin dynasty as “chief military administrator” (*duqianxia* 都鈐轄) of the four clan confederation of dBon-po (Chinese *Mubo* 木波).²⁰

The dBon-po's ruling Zhao family were successors of rGyal-sras (*Juesiluo* 隴斯囉, 997-1065) of the Tsong-kha kingdom, who had supported the Song and the Ganzhou Uyghurs against the rising Xia dynasty (Petech 1983, 174-79; Iwasaki 1993). As reward for their loyalty to the Song, the dynasty later received the Song imperial surname of Zhao. After Dading 4 (1164), however, there followed a period of turmoil in which the Zhao family's “Bayang” 把羊 confederation and the Cog-ro (Chinese *Zhuanglang* 莊浪)²¹ clan confederation supported by the Xia both broke up. They were succeeded in Dading 9 (1169) by the new dBon-po confederation ruled by the Zhao family and allied with the Jin (*JS* 91.2016-18).

This dBon-po confederation occupied an area numbered at 40,000 households, mostly pastoralists and making a living off of barley, butter, curds, and wild vegetables (*JS* 91.2016-18). As pastoralists, they had abundant horses, and during the later Jin, when the dynasty in North China had lost their pastures in Inner Mongolia, it was proposed to purchase horses for silver from among the “Raw” Qiang and the dBon-po of Taozhou 洮州 and Hezhou 河州 (*JS* 107.2369). The purchasing with silver may indicate that tea drinking—the usual article exchanged for horses on the western frontier—was not yet current among the people of the Tibetan plateau. The “Sketch of the Black Tatars,” written in the 1230s when the dBon-po had already surrendered to the Mongols, treats the dBon-po as the Mongols' main conquest in the southwest. It describes them as the “chief of the Western Borderlands tribes; they do not have any monarch.”²² This reference to the lack of a monarch may refer not just to the well-known lack of centralized rulership among the Amdowa nomads, but also to the name dBon-po, which is a term not for a sovereign ruler, but rather means “fraternal nephew” or “official”—evidently the name was given to the Zhaos in light of their role as officials for Chinese dynasties.²³

South of the Zhao family lands were the native rulers of the Diezhou 疊州 prefecture (modern The-bo or Diebu 迭部 county in the Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture), variously said to be of Qiang or Tibetan origin. Their following numbered 43 clans of mostly Qiang origin, 14 towns, and over 300,000 households, who remained allied with the Song. But during the

20 I am grateful to Ren Xiaobo 任小波 of Fudan University in Shanghai (emails January 27th and March 15th, 2014) for his information on the correct Tibetan original of 木波.

21 I am grateful to Shen Weirong of Renmin University in Beijing (email, February 9th, 2014) for his information on the correct Tibetan original of 莊浪.

22 西蕃部領，不立君；see Xu 2014: §48, pp.194 [text], 216 [commentary]

23 It may also be a more specific reference to their status as fictive junior clansmen or “fraternal nephews” of the Song imperial house.

Mingchang 明昌 era (1190-95) the Diezhou ruler “Qingyike” 青宜可 (d. 1222; cf. *JS* 16.364) began to communicate with Jin border officials (*JS* 98.2175-76). Other groups like the “Ronglu” 容魯 or the “Lugan” 盧甘 Qiang further out from the frontier (*JS* 91.2017) were allied with the Xia and are less well known.

Until 1206, treaty agreements between the Jin, Song, and Xia enforced stability on the political alignments of these Tibetan and Qiang groups. But when the Song dynasty launched its revisionist attack on the Jin in Taihe 泰和 6 (1206), turmoil resulted immediately. The dBon-po ruler was killed in a Song invasion, assisted by Jin turncoats (*JS* 12.273), but then the Diezhou 疊州 ruler “Qingyike” and 18 tribes were brought over to the Jin side in a diplomatic coup and even helped the Jin temporarily occupy Sichuan (*JS* 12.277, 98.2176, 2182, 103.2274, 106.2340).

The turmoil associated with the 1206 war would have been an excellent opportunity for Ilqa Senggün to build up a new base, although there is no direct confirmation that he played a role in it. The Xia was nominally maintaining its peace treaty with the Jin, but was in reality still quite hostile—thus using Ilqa could cause trouble for the Jin, without directly involving the Xia court. Such political considerations would explain why Ilqa Senggün was working among the Tibetans rather than the ethnically more akin Uyghurs and Tatars. Afterwards, from Zhenyou 貞祐 3 (1215) to Yuanguang 元光 2 (1223), turmoil broke out again among Tibetans as the Xia turned openly hostile to the Jin and both sides sought to win over support of local forces (see *JS* 101.2232, 15.331, 16.359, 113.2486, 16.363, 16.372 and the Zhao family biography in *YS* 123.3028-30). This would have given a direct reason for the Xia to encourage Ilqa to make trouble for the Jin, but by this time he had almost certainly fled to Kuča.

In summary, I reconstruct the following scenario: after fleeing Mongolia in autumn, 1203, Ilqa Senggün took refuge in the Xia kingdom, which had long served as patrons and protectors for his Kereyid dynasty. Around 1206 when the Song attacked the Jin and local Tibetan commanders in what is now Gannan 甘南 began to shift their alliances and join in the conflict, the Xia rulers dispatched their ally Ilqa, probably with an entourage of Kereyid refugees, to try and build a following among the Tibetans. The aim would be both to benefit himself by building a new following among the Tibetans and also to help his Xia patrons without openly violating their treaty obligations to the Jin. Ilqa’s attempts met Tibetan opposition, however, and even the Xia may have become increasingly wary of openly harboring an enemy of the new Mongol empire. In the end he fled west and tried to build a new base in the Tianshan mountains north of Kuča.

While this first episode appears to have been minor and short-lived, it was not without implications for the future. The Mongol rulers repeatedly used the harboring of fugitives as a *casus belli*. The turmoil spread by Mongol refugees also directly weakened many of their neighbors, such as the Qara-Khitay, even before the Mongol armies first arrived on the scene. It is unclear if the Tibetans were sufficiently hostile to Ilqa Senggün to avoid the charge of harboring him, but certainly this small episode showed that just the Mongol control over their Naiman and Merkid subjects would always be uncertain until their Qara-Khitay, Qarluq, and

Qipchaq allies remained unconquered, so too the conquest of the Xia would remain dangerously incomplete as long as holdouts could take refuge among the Tibetans.

Already at this time, Chinggis Khan was aware of the Tibetans as a people living high in the mountains. In a passage whose importance has been highlighted by Stephen Haw (2014: 41-43), his conversation with the Jin defector Guo Baoyu 郭寶玉, as reported in *YSjuan* 149, shows that Chinggis Khan was well aware of Tibet. As reported in his biography, Guo Baoyu defected to the Mongol side during the initial hostilities between the Mongols and the Jin dynasty. Chinggis Khan asked Guo for a strategy on how to conquer the Central Plains (*Zhongyuan* 中原), that is, the North China heartland. Guo advocated an indirect attack:

Baoyu said, “The power of the Central Plain is great and it cannot be taken in a sudden attack. The various Fan 蕃 of the Southwest are brave and can be brought into service. If you first take them over and use them for your plans against the Jin, you will certainly achieve your ambition” (*YS* 149.3521).²⁴

Guo Baoyu was a native of Huazhou 華州 (modern Huaxian 華縣) in Shaanxi and presumably was familiar with the “Fan” (a general term for non-Han, in context here meaning Tibetans and/or Qiang) from Jin experiences with them as allies against the Song in the 1206-08 war. He thus proposed that Chinggis Khan use the same strategy against the Jin itself. Chinggis Khan preferred the advice of other defectors who warned him not to delay but immediately attack to the Jin heartland,²⁵ but may have kept it in mind.

Sübe’edei and the Kökenuur Border People

Something like Guo Baoyu’s strategy became a reality in *bing/xu* 丙戌 (1226) when Sübe’edei invaded from the west and subjugated the Yellow Uyghur (*Sarigh Uyghur* 撒里畏兀兒) ruler or *tigin* (的斤), and the “Chimin” 赤閔²⁶ in the Tsaidam (Qaidam) Basin in western Kökenuur, and raided the border Tibetans, seizing large numbers of horses (Saguchi 1986: 1-2). This attack was apparently directed against both the Xia and the Jin.

In a passage without a specific date, Guo Baoyu’s biography writes:

The emperor was about to launch an expedition against the Western Fan 蕃 but worried that most of their walled towns were protected by rugged mountains. He asked Baoyu for a strategy to attack them, and he replied, “If their walled towns are in heaven, then they really cannot be conquered, but if they are under heaven, then, yes, they can be conquered.” The emperor was impressed and authorized him to raid their horses and command their suppression (*YS* 149.3521).²⁷

24 寶玉對曰：「中原勢大，不可忽也。西南諸蕃勇悍可用，宜先取之，藉以圖金，必得志焉。」

25 This was the advice for example of Shimo Ming’an 石抹明安; see *YS* 150.3556.

26 On these names see below.

27 帝將伐西蕃，患其城多依山險，問寶玉攻取之策，對曰：「使其城在天上，則不可取，如不在天上，至則取矣。」帝壯之，授抄馬都鎮撫。

Read in the context of the *YS* biography, this episode comes between an account of 1211 and 1213. But it is quite impossible that Chinggis Khan could have been thinking of an attack on the Tibetans at that time. One may assume that like all *YS* biographies the account was somewhat abbreviated and that this debate took place well after the initial consultation between Chinggis Khan and Guo Baoyu. The historical context would fit the period of 1226-27 well, and the reference to Guo Baoyu plundering Tibetan horses connects this account to that of Sübe’edei’s, who indeed seized many horses in the Jin dynasty’s Tibetan border prefectures.

This attack is described more accurately in the biography of the great Mongol general Sübe’edei. This biography survives in three more or less abbreviated citations, two in the different biographies of Sübe’edei included with the *Yuan shi*, and one in the biography of his grandson Aju written by Wang Yun 王恽. (This most reliable edition of this latter source is its citation in the Yuan-era blockprint of the *Yuanchao mingchen shilue* 元朝名臣史略, edited by Su Tianjue 蘇天爵). All are, however, evidently derived from a single source. Placed side by side the three accounts read as follows:

In year 21 [1226], he seized the Sarīgh Uyghur, Tegin, and “Chimin” tribes and Deshunzhou, Zhenrongzhou, Lanzhou, Huizhou, and Taozhou prefectures, and presented 3,000 mares. 二十一年，取駭里畏吾特勤、赤憫等部，德順、鎮戎、蘭、會、洮等州，獻牝馬三千匹。
YS 122.3008

In year *bing/xu* [1226], he seized the Sarīgh Uyghur, Digin, and “Chimin” tribes, and also plundered the tribes on the Tibetan (*Xifan*) border. 丙戌，取撒里畏兀的斤、赤閔等部，又掠西蕃邊部。
Su 1996: 2.24

In the year *bing/xu* [1226], he conquered the Sarīgh Uyghur, Digin, and “Chimin” tribes, as well as the Lanzhou, Huizhou, Taozhou, and Hezhou²⁸ prefectures, obtaining 5,000 mares, all of which he presented to the court. 丙戌，攻下撒里畏吾特勤、赤閔等部，及德順、鎮戎、蘭、會、洮、河諸州，得牝馬五千匹，悉獻於朝。
YS 121.2977

The account in *YS* 121.2977 contains all the information of the other two and is likely to be identical to the original text. (The inconsistency of 三千匹 and 五千匹 is presumably due to textual corruption; 三 and 五 are frequently confused in the copying of texts.) In this account the people plundered by Sübe’edei are divided into two groups: first a set of “tribes” (*bu* 部),²⁹

28 Deshunzhou 德順州 is modern Longde 隆德 and Zhenrongzhou 鎮戎州 is modern Guyuan 固原, both in southern Ningxia. Lanzhou 蘭州, Huizhou 會州, and Taozhou 洮州, are modern Lanzhou 蘭州 city, Huining 會寧, and Lintan 臨潭, respectively, all in southern Gansu; Lintan is part of the Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Hezhou 河州 is near the modern Dongxiang 東鄉 Autonomous County in the Linxia 臨夏 Hui Autonomous Prefecture, southern Gansu.

29 In this list only the name of the Yellow Uyghurs is immediately transparent. While it is clear that *teqin* 特勤 is Turkic *tegin* “prince” (*dijin* 的斤 is another attested transcription of the same term, based on the Turkic dialectal pronunciation of *digin*), it is unclear if this *tegin* refers to the ruler of the Yellow Uyghurs, or if he was a separate leader who was also conquered. Editors have assumed the former reading, but it is not obvious why their leader would also be mentioned for the Yellow Uyghurs. I find the latter possibility more compelling and have translated accordingly. A final puzzle is the identity of the “Chimin,” which is not attested elsewhere to my knowledge and which I have not been able to identify. The transcription as

and then a set of prefectures (*zhou* 州). Wang Yun's summary of the list of prefectures as also a set of "Western Fan border tribes" (*Xifan bian bu* 西蕃邊部) is, however, not unwarranted. All of the listed prefectures were on the western frontier of the Jin dynasty and had major non-Han populations. Deshunzhou and Zhenrongzhou both had a large population of *Fan* (蕃) or non-Han (*JS* 113.2485-86). Although it is not necessary to believe that only "Fan" were plundered, certainly the large yield of horses shows that the areas Sübe'edei ravaged were primarily pastoralist, and thus likely Tibetan and/or Qiang. Since the Mongol army had long since taken the Jin as their enemies as well, Sübe'edei paid little attention to the difference between the Xia-aligned "Fan" and Jin-aligned "Fan." Both were freely plundered as Sübe'edei moved in the area at the corner where the Jin, Xia, and "raw" (or independent) Qiang and Tibetans powers all coincided.³⁰

Combining this account with that of Ilqa Senggün and the Guo Baoyu biography, Chinggis Khan evidently had a number of separate aims in this first armed conflict with the Tibetans. It is possible that the Tibetans were seen as guilty of having harbored Ilqa and hence rendered themselves guilty. At the same time, occupying the Tibetan border prefectures could be used to attack the Jin in Shaanxi, taking advantage of their strategic position, the war-like potential of the Tibetans if drafted into the Mongol army, and the abundant herds of the Tibetans. Whether because of Tibetan recalcitrance or a change of plans, however, the Mongols do not appear to have forced Tibetans to serve in their cavalry at this point—that would come later in the Mongols' conflicts with the Song.

Chikü's Appanage in Silingjiu

Since the fourth century, when peoples of the Mongolian plateau have expanded, Mongolian expansion has historically always spilled over into the Kökenuur (Qinghai) region of the Northwestern Tibetan plateau. When this spillover met the imperial expansion of Tibetan language and culture northeast from the gTsang-po valley, an ethnic "Mongolia-Tibetan Interface" was created in the Kökenuur or Amdo area. Whether in the form of Azha or Tuyuhun 吐谷渾 and the Tibetan empire, or Monguors (the Tu 土 nationality) and Amdo nomads, or the Oirats and the mGo-log nomads, this interface has continued to the present.

A similar sort of expansion of Mongolian peoples into Kökenuur took place in the early Mongol conquest. As I have discussed, in 1227, the Mongol empire expanded its assault on the Xia into the Jin border areas, and took Taozhou 洮州 (modern Lintan 臨潭), Hezhou 河州 (near the modern Dongxiang Autonomous County), and Xiningzhou 西寧州 (*YS* 1.24). Of these conquests, the first two are attributed elsewhere to Sübe'edei's campaign (See *YS*

presented is the most conservative possibility, but the first syllable could be closed with *-b*, *-t*, or *-q*, and the second syllable could possible end in *-l* or *-r* equally as well as *-n*.

30 "Raw" Qiang are placed along the borders of Lintaofu 臨洮府 (including Taozhou 洮州—modern Lintao 臨洮 in Gansu's Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture), Huizhou 會州 (modern Maoxian 茂县 in Sichuan's Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture), and Jishizhou 積石州 (modern Xunhua 循化 Salar Autonomous Prefecture) prefecture in modern Qinghai. See *JS* 24.549 and 26.654.

121.2977, 122.3008 and the discussion above) to which may be added that of Xiningzhou 西寧州, or modern Xining 西寧, whose contemporary Mongolian pronunciation was Silingjiu.³¹

The Mongol conquest of Silingjiu involved two population movements. First at least some of the indigenous Tibetan population was deported to “Yunjing 雲京,” an obscure place designation that seems to refer to present-day Datong 大同 In Shanxi province.³² Sometime before 1236 (probably well before), a son-in-law (*küregen*) of Chinggis Khan, Chikü, was sent with four thousands of the Qonggirad clan to garrison Xiningzhou 西寧州 prefecture (this is present-day Xining 西寧 in Qinghai province.) In the Persian historian Rashid al-Din he appears a number of times, but with confusing inconsistencies in his name and that of his wife (the daughter of Chinggis Khan) and parentage. I intend to address these confusions more fully in a separate article; here I will merely present the conclusions of my research. Chikü’s name was also written Shikü in an account which Rashid al-Din took from an informant of the Olqunud surname, one shared by Chinggis Khan’s mother Ö’elün. The Olqunud were a branch of the Qonggirad, and this informant was one of the subjects of Chikü’s; the *ch* to *sh* sound change appears to be characteristic of a wide variety of eastern Mongolic languages and dialects, and the Qonggirad were originally from present-day eastern Inner Mongolia.

Rashid al-Din presents his information on “Shikü” twice, once in the Register of Emirs of a Thousand (Rashid ad-Din/Smirnova 1952: 273; Rashiduddin 1999: 278; cf. Rawshan and Musawi, p.603) and once in his biography of the Qonggirad house (Rashid ad-Din/Khetagurov 1952: 162; Rashiduddin 1998: 86; Romaskevich, pp.396-97). The two accounts share common information, evidently derived from a single informant, which in the biography of the Qonggirad house was greatly expanded with new information, and occasionally altered. Some of this new information appears to be accurate, but one of the alterations, by which Shikü’s appanage is changed from “Tibet” (*Tebet*) to Tuma’ud~Tüme’üd must be due to miscopying or misunderstanding.

That Chikü (~Shikü) *Küregen* was posted to Tibet, or at least the frontier areas thereof, is confirmed by in East Asian records in which his great-grandson Janggi (章吉~昌吉)³³ had his main territorial appanage in Silingjiu/Xiningzhou (YS 60.1452, cf. YS 12.249 n. 15, 15.317-18; Hambis and Pelliot 1945: 160-162 n. 2, 49 n.2).³⁴ It is also confirmed by the fact that Chikü was

31 The Yuan-era Uyghur-Mongolian pronunciation is attested in Marco Polo’s Silingiu (Polo [1938] 1976: 179 [§72]). Xīníng 西寧 is known to this day as Zi-ling in Tibetan and Seleng in Mongolian.

32 See the biography of Liu Rong 劉容 in YS 134.3259. Despite his name, his family was certainly non-Han since his biography occurs in the Mongol and *Semuren* 色目人 section of the YS biographies. His grandfather’s name Aqa 阿華, Mongolian for “elder brother,” must have been given to him by the Mongol conquerors. I associate “Yunjing 雲京” with Datong 大同 as a mix of Datong’s medieval prefectural name, Yunzhongfu 雲中府 and its Jin-era designation as Xijing 西京 or “Western Capital.”

33 The name Janggi was written CANKKI. Judging from the Chinese transcriptions, the name had two pronunciations, a Mongolian one as Janggi as well as a Uyghur one as Changgi.

34 This assignment to the Tangut-Tibet borderland may be part of the background behind the enigmatic title of Prince of Qashi (*Héxī Wáng* 河西王) said in YS 118.2915 to have been granted to Chikü’s putative father Alchi Noyan in *ren/chen* (1232). As a rule, Qashi refers to the Tangut kingdom (q.v.) and Alchi Noyan has no other known association with that place.

later to participate with Prince Köten in the invasion of Sichuan,³⁵ since Silingjiu was on the western frontier of Köten's much larger appanage.

Chikü's ancestry is somewhat mysterious. The passage of Rashid al-Din calls him the son of Alchu Noyan, which appears to be an alternative pronunciation of Alchi Noyan, the well-known son of Deyi Sechen and brother-in-law of Chinggis Khan. But Chikü is nowhere else listed among Alchi Noyan's sons, and Rashid al-Din's gloss that gives Derke Küregen as an different name for Alchu Noyan seems to be an effort to reconcile an alternative tradition by which Chikü's father was actually Derge Küregen. Comparing these and other passages in Rashid al-Din, I have concluded that Chikü was actually the son of the original ruler of the Qonggirad house, Terge Amal (Terge and Derge are two readings of the same spelling in the Uyghur-Mongolian script). We know that Terge Amal was offered one of Chinggis Khan's daughters but rejected her as too ugly and was executed for his folly. The Qonggirad house was then placed under Alchi Noyan, and Alchi's Bosqur house was merged with the Qonggirad house. If my hypothesis is correct and Chikü was Terge's son, then in the end, he received Chinggis Khan's ugly daughter in a levirate marriage and received a portion of the original Qonggirads, who were then dispatched to Silingjiu.

Rashid al-Din designates Chikü's appanage as part of Tibet. Marco Polo's description of "Silingiu" (i.e. Silingjiu) says it was part of the "kingdom of Ergiuul" which in turn was part of the "Province of Tangut," which is truer to Mongol and Yuan era administrative divisions.³⁶ "Ergiuul" is probably Marco Polo's rendition of the Tangut name of Xiliangzhou 西涼州³⁷ and the "kingdom of Ergiuul" represents the appanage of Köten and his descendants. However, Marco Polo's description (Polo [1938] 1976: §72, pp.178-81) highlights yaks, musk deer (*kiüder* in Mongolian), and the Reeve's pheasant, all characteristic fauna of the eastern Tibetan plateau (Haw 2006: 90-91, 134-35, 126, and 128). Thus although Silingjiu may not have had such characteristically Tibetan fauna itself, it was known as the gateway to Tibetan areas that did.³⁸

35 See *SWQZL*, sub anno 1236 (Wang Guowei [1926] 1962: 106r/217). Although the manuscripts here all have *Chiqu* 赤曲, i.e. Chikü, many scholars have mistakenly emended the text to match *YS* 2.35, which mentions the death of Ögedei's son Köchü (elsewhere written 曲出 in the *SWQZL*) in the same year. But as Naka Michio recognized (Naka 1915: 144), the two entries have nothing to do with each other and no emendation is necessary. Köchü played no role in the campaigns in Sichuan.

36 The "Kingdom of Ergiuul" is evidently the appanage of Köten's descendants, while the "province of Tangut" is an historical reference to the area of the Xia dynasty and to the Gansu Branch Secretariat, which was in existence by Zhiyuan 至元 19 (1282). The relationship of Chikü *Küregen's* appanage to Prince Köten's is not clear, but it is not unlikely that there was some degree of subordination of the "in-law" to the "son."

37 Present-day Wuwei 武威 in the Gansu corridor.

38 Haw (2006: 90-91) argues that Polo's Silingiu should be Xizhou 熙州, an earlier name for Lintaoфу 臨洮府. Yet Xīning 西寧 is known to this day as Seleng or Zi-ling in Mongolian and Tibetan, which is a perfect phonetic match with Polo's Silingiu (Polo's *-giu* represents *jiu* or the Yuan-era pronunciation of *zhou* 州 "prefecture"). And while Xizhou was used for Lintaoфу in the Song and Jin it is virtually never used in that sense during the Yuan. While Marco Polo's description of Silingiu (Xiningzhou) being on the road from "Ergiuul" (Xiliangzhou) to Catai (North China) is, as Haw points out, misleading geographically, given the identity in names such a consideration would not seem dispositive, especially given the other examples of Marco Polo's tendency to get the story right, but the exact location wrong. While Haw may be correct about

These Qonggirad eventually went on to make up a significant proportion of the Mongolic people settled in the Silingjiu borderlands. Although direct connections cannot now be traced between them and the agricultural Monguor (or Tu), it is likely that they were a major factor in the linguistic “Mongolization” of this community. Among the pastoralist Yogurs of the Gansu-Qinghai borderlands, the Qonggirad surname is still found (Saguchi 1986: 18-20); these too are likely descendants of Chikū’s people.

Tibetan Hostages in the Campaigns under Ögedei

Mongol campaigns in areas of the northwest Tibetan plateau intensified in the reign of Chinggis Khan’s successor, Ögedei Qa’an (d. 1241). In the winter of 1230-31 and the spring of 1231, Mongol armies under Ögedei and his younger brother Tolui attempted fruitlessly to break through Tongguan 潼關 Pass and enter the Jin dynasty’s final redoubt in Henan province. Stymied by the effective Jin defense of the pass, and the scorched earth resistance which stripped the provisions from Shaanxi province, the two Mongol commanders were also unwilling to allow the Mongol army they assembled to simply give up and go home, lest they be humiliated in front of the Jin generals. Thus while the two sons of Chinggis Khan went back to Inner Mongolia to consider their options, their army was ordered to stay in the field during summer and autumn of 1231, but retreated west into the Tibetan borderlands where pickings were presumably more plentiful. Even so, as the later Persian historian wrote, “Things got so bad that they were forced to eat human flesh, any-and-everything animal, and dry grass. They went onto mountains and plains in hunting circles . . .” (Rashiduddin 1999: I, 314; cf. Rashiduddin 1999: I, 385). Only in the winter of 1231-32 did Tolui return to the starving Mongol army and lead it through the Song-held Han River valley in vast flanking movement into Henan.³⁹ Did this starving army’s occupation of

Xining not being having the fauna in question, this may be another case where Polo anchors description of a broader region to a place name of its “gateway” from Mongol lands. Thus in §71, Polo attaches to the name “Mecrit” (i.e. Merkid) a description of habits and customs (including hunting, absence of agriculture, and reindeer herding) which pertains not to them, but to the Bargu (i.e. Barghu) and other people further to the north (Polo [1938] 1976: 177 [§71]). Rashid al-Din shows the beginning of this confusion when he writes that “in our times the *yūrt* of the Sūldūs house (*qawm*) [who received the Merkid’s old territory] is in the vicinity of those forests” (Rashid ad-Din/Khetagurov 1952: 59; Rashiduddin 1998: 59). What he means is that the Suldus’s territory was the steppe territory that was nearest to the forests. But one could imagine someone unfamiliar with the actual situation thus concluding that the Suldus are actually a forest people. Marco Polo seems to have made this narrative confusion here with the “Merkid” and “Barghu,” and a similar confusion may be postulated for Silingjiu and Tibet.

39 On this campaign, see Atwood 2014. The specific retreat of the army into the Tibetan borderlands, while not directly stated in a clear manner by any one source, is based on the following pieces of evidence: First, there is the biography of Chizhan Hexi 赤盞合喜 (*JS* 113.2494) which quotes Jin officials saying in response to Tolui’s advance through Song territory in Zhengda 正大 8, XI (November-December, 1231): “The Northern Army has braved ten thousand *li* of difficulties for two years and their labors have been extreme.” This would only make sense if the army had been continuously in the field for at least part of two lunar years, that is, from the initial advance in autumn, 1230, until that time. Secondly, the continuation of the *Dajin Guozhi* 大金國志 speaks of the Mongol army responding to their defeat at Tongguan Pass by retreating into Xia territory and conquering it for “several years” before getting a plan from them to pass through Song territory and enter Henan (Yuwen 2012: 26.362). While the reference to conquering the Xia

territory in the Tibetan borderlands lead to conflict with the Tibetan and Qiang inhabitants? It is not directly stated, but such a conflict would seem likely, unless the inhabitants simply vacated the army out of fear of the Mongol army.

After the final extirpation of the Jin dynasty, Ögedei launched a large-scale attack on the Song dynasty, simultaneously with the great Western campaign against the Qipchaqs, Ossetians, Ruthenians, Bolghars, and other peoples of Eastern Europe. In the spring of *yi/wei* (Jan.-April, 1235), Ökōdei gave each of his three elder sons, Güyüg, Köten, and Kōchū a theater of campaign: Güyüg with Batu and Möngke on the great western expedition against the Qipchaqs and their allies, Köten against the Song in the Qin-Gong 秦鞏 area (southern Gansu),⁴⁰ and Kōchū against the Song in Henan 河南 (*YS* 2.34). Since the Song dynasty attack was, relatively speaking, much less successful, it has not been widely studied. But it formed the context in which some of the earliest Tibetan commanders in Mongol service emerged.

Prince Köten was Ökōdei's second son. During the latter half of his father's reign, Köten joined his older brother Güyüg in the ranks of the major princes in the empire, they being the only two of the emperor's sons to be listed as recipients of large-scale revenue appanages in the North China plain (*YS* 2.35). Entirely apart from his revenue appanage in North China, Köten also received as his territorial appanage the area of the former Tangut (Qashi 河西 or Xia 夏) kingdom. The center of his administration was placed in Xiliangzhou 西涼州 (*YS* 125.3072).

When Köten was ordered to pacify the Qin-Gong area by his father, the Jin garrisons in the area had not yet surrendered, despite the fall of the Jin government. Köten's mandate was thus to pacify the remnants of the Jin dynasty and then supervise the invasion of Sichuan, via the upper Han 漢 river valley. Köten was given supreme command of an army already fighting in the Shaanxi-Gansu area. This army was commanded by Taghai Gambo, a Tangut general who had joined Mongol forces in 1221 and a large force of soldiers detached from the mixed *tammachi* (permanent garrison) armies that were created in 1217 and put under the command of Muqali.⁴¹

is obviously misplaced, this too envisions a move of the armies northwest and their maintenance in hard field conditions for a long time. Finally there is the account in Rashid al-Din, which says that Tolui led his army through "Tibet" into Henan, and took over a year. Such a description could not apply to the final advance in winter, 1231-32, which is known to be through the Hanzhong area of Shaanxi and then down the Han River into Henan. This reference to a retreat into Tibet must thus apply to the summer and autumn of 1231, when Tolui and Ögedei had retired to Inner Mongolia for consultations, but in which the soldiers were still in the field.

40 Qin-Gong 秦鞏 designated the areas of the Jin dynasty's Qinzhou 秦州 (present-day Tianshui 天水 city) and Gongzhou 鞏州 or Gongchang 鞏昌 (present-day Longxi 陇西) both in eastern Gansu. Sichuan for many years during the initial Mongol conquests was ruled as an extension of this base area.

41 Taghai Gambo first joined Muqali in year *xin/si* 辛巳, sometime between moons VIII and X (mid-August to mid-November, 1221) when Muqali crossed into the Ordos area in preparation for an assault on the Jin via Shaanxi. At this time the Tangut ruler sent two *gambos*, Taghai and "Wangnuge" 汪奴哥, to present "local products" (probably camels, horses, and other livestock useful for provisioning a military campaign) and five *tümens* of soldiers to participate in Muqali's campaign (Haw 2014: 46; *YCMCSL* 1.6-7). From this time on, Taghai Gambo appears to have been served under Muqali. At least in its usual form, his name is Turco-Mongolian, but it may be an adaption or replacement of an earlier Tangut name. Under Ökōdei a large body of the *tammachi* army originally assigned to Muqali was split off and put under Taghai Gambo's command as a separate *tammachi* army to be stationed to the west in Shaanxi-Gansu area. Taghai Gambo is generally called

The references to Kōten in the *Yuan shi*, however, make little reference to any military role of his, only to his political role conferring titles and making political decisions. It seems that Taghai Gambo was his major field commander, responsible for most of the military operations.

The first stage of Kōten's military operations were completed in *yi/wei*, XII (Dec., 1235-Jan., 1236), when the last Jin commander in the area, the Öng'üt Wang Shixian 汪世顯 finally surrendered in Gongchang 鞏昌 (present-day Longxi 隴西 in Gansu province) with all his followers (*YS* 2.34, 155.3649, 121.2984, 162.3791). Wang's Öng'üt clan went on to exercise the dominant role over the area for the next seventy years as autonomous administrators over what was termed the “Twenty-Four Cities of Gongchang 鞏昌” (*Qin-Gōng èrshìsì chéng* 鞏昌二十四城).⁴²

In the next year, *bing/shen* 丙申 or 1236, Kōten's main army invaded Sichuan via Dasanguan 大散關 pass,⁴³ while another force under the Öng'üt artillery commander “Alchur” 按竺邇⁴⁴ cut

“supreme commander” (*dū yuánshuài* 都元帥) but in *YS* 150.3548, he is given the title *taishi* 太師 (q.v.), which is usually associated with Muqali's family in their role as commander of the *tammachi*. His field of conquest was the Han 漢 river valley and Sichuan. The beginning of his command is dated in *SWQZL*, *sub anno* 1234 (Wang 1962: 105a [215]) and *YS* 2.34 to the seventh moon of *jia/wu* 甲午 (1234; see also *YS* 154.3635), but most of the biographies of his subordinates have them assigned to him in the following *yi/wei* 乙未 (1235) year (see *YS* 123.3024, 132.3219, 135.3278, 149.3517). Units and commanders assigned to him form a cross-section of the *tammachi* forces originally included in Muqali's army. They included Tatars probably of Jiūn origin, i.e. former Jin border troops (*YS* 132.3219, 135.3276), Jalayirs (123.3024), Uru'ud (135.3278), Öng'üt (121.2985), and a Dörbed named Tammachi (132.3211). But Han Chinese were probably the majority of the troops. Many of these Han had been incorporated in Mongol units as prisoners or volunteers, such as Hao Heshang Ba'atur 郝和尚拔都 who was taken prisoner in Taiyuanfu and attached to the Uru'ud unit of Ke'etei, Liu Xiang'an 劉亨安 whose clan in Manchuria volunteered to join Muqali's army, and Zheng Ding 鄭鼎, an orphan from Zezhou 澤州 in Hebei, who became a chiliarch and was one of the first commanders attached to Taghai Gambo (*YS* 150.3553, 150.3560, 154.3635). Others fought in all-Han units under Han commanders, such as the *tümen* commander Liu Heima 劉黑馬 (*YS* 149.3517). Taghai Gambo's main subordinate commanders were Temür-Buqa, a Tatar who commanded the *Yeke Mingghan* “Main Thousand,” and the artillery unit, and Zhuge 朱哥, the son of the Kitan commander Tughan *Wangshai* who commanded seven *tümen* of Kitan, Tangut, and Han units, including the *tümen* of Liu Heima (*YS* 132.3219, 149.3532).

42 This same unit has a wide variety of names, being sometime called simply “The Twenty-Four Cities” or “The Over Twenty Prefectures of Qin-Gong (and other areas)” *Qin-Gong (deng) ershiyu zhou* 秦鞏(等)二十餘州. The prefectures in question are listed in the biography of the Öng'üt Wang Shixian 汪世顯 in Su 1996: 6.70, as the Gongchang and Vicinity Military Commander *Gongchang deng chu zongshuai fu* 鞏昌等處總帥府, with first 32 prefectures and then 15 (*YS* 60.1429-33). For the interpretation of these differing lists as showing the initial form, expansion, and then contraction of the Wang family's territory, see Li Zhi'an 2013.

43 On the present-day railway line between Baoji 寶雞 city and Fengxian 風縣 county, both in Shaanxi province.

44 This name is found in two forms in the *YS*, as *Ànzhúèr* 按竺邇 and *Ànzhùnù* 按住奴~*Ànzhùnù* 按主奴 (see Yao Jing'an 1982: 359b). The first character routinely represents either *an-* or *al-* in Yuan-era transcriptions, while in a non-initial position the second character might represent *-ju-* or *-chu-*; since *-j-* is very rare in Turkic languages the latter may be supposed. The third character is more problematic. It is tempting to give 邇 the archaic pre-Tang reading of *ní* and thus link both types of transcription with Jurchen *anchun* “gold.” But such a reading would have not parallel in Yuan transcriptions, and *nú* 奴 is only rarely used phonetically and much more often as a well-known personal name element, forming compound names with the sense of “slave of ...” and with the reading fossilized as a late Northwest Tang pronunciation *-du* (see Zieme 1994). Most likely then the two forms are based on two different Turkic words, not different transcriptions of the same word. The first I tentatively read as Al-chur, combining two common name elements (perhaps as “reddish-golden *chur*” (an official title) and the second as Alchudu with the sense “slave of good luck.”

through the Tibetan regions to the west. The two columns converged on Chengdufu 成都府 (present-day Chengdu city, Sichuan). They successfully sieged the city, but when they withdrew, Song forces recovered the city (YS 121.2984; YS 2.35-36). Not until 1241 did the Mongol forces retake the city and hold it permanently; sporadic fighting continued until 1243 (YS 121.2985; YS 155.3650).

Both sides in this campaign made significant use of native troops from the mountains around the Sichuan basin. The Song defenders enlisted troops from the present-day Guizhou area, commanded by the tributary Tian 田 and Yang 楊 family local rulers (YS 155.3649-50).⁴⁵ On the Mongol side, Wang Shixian and Alchur, both commanders from the Turkic Öng'üts of Gongchang also played a major role.⁴⁶ Not surprisingly, in view of the role that “Qingyike” had played in the Jin counter-attack against the Song in the 1206-1208 war, the Mongols also recognized the strategic importance of pacifying and using the Tibetan and Qiang populations. Thus while passing through Dangchang 宕昌, Jiezhou 階州, Wenzhou 文州, and Longzhou 龍州,⁴⁷ Alchur and his artillery unit forced the surrender of chieftain “Kantuo-Mengjia” 勘陶孟迦 and 10 Tibetan clans (YS 121.2984).

The most important Tibetan family forced into Mongol service at this time were the Zhaos of the dBon-po. As mentioned above, the dBon-po were a confederation of four clans, mostly pastoralists. This dBon-po confederation had come into existence in Dading 9 (1169) when the Zhao family abandoned their Song allegiance and went over to the Jin (JS 91.2016-18). The head of the family, Zhao Agechang 趙阿哥昌, was appointed by Köten as the Military Pacification Commissioner (Anfushi 安撫使) of Diezhou 疊州 (YS 123.3028). This may mark an expansion in the power of the family, since previously Diezhou was under another Tibetan or Qiang ruler, “Qingyike” who had died a little over a decade earlier. Certainly the appointment of his son, Zhao Agepan 阿哥潘, to administer Lintaofu 臨洮府 (YS 123.3028) marked an expansion of the family’s sphere of power. The Zhao family was certainly the leading Tibetan family of the frontier under Mongol rule.

Consistent with the Mongols’ usual practice, Agepan 阿哥潘 seems to have been originally recruited into the Mongol army as a hostage, and it was in this status that he originally participated in the Mongol campaigns in Sichuan. Although his hostage status is not directly stated, that is the most natural way to interpret his role as the son of a newly surrendered local ruler immediately entering the entourage of the prince who conquered his family. Agepan’s son, Chongxi 重喜 is, moreover, explicitly said to have served Köten as a bodyguard (*wei qinwei* 為親衛; YS 123.3029), a position that was filled by hostages. Presumably, Chongxi was given as a hostage when Agechang

45 The Yangs of Bozhou 播州 and the Tians of Sizhou 思州 were two dynasties of *tusi* 土司 or local ethnic rulers in Guizhou. The Tians began to rule in the Sui dynasty and the Yangs in late Tang dynasty; both continued into the late Ming. Sizhou is present-day Cengong 岑巩 in the Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture in Southeast Guizhou and Bozhou is present-day Zunyi 遵義 city. Both clans are generally seen as belonging to the Miao nationality today.

46 See Wang’s biographies in Su 1996: 6.88-91 and YS 155.3649-50 and Alchur’s biography in YS 121.2982-85.

47 Present-day Dangchang 宕昌, Wudu 武都, Wenxian 文县, and Mupi Tibetan Township 木皮藏族乡, respectively. Dangchang, Wudu, and Wenxian are all in Gansu’s Longnan 陇南 district, while Mupi is in Pingwu 平武 county in Mianyang 绵阳 municipality of Sichuan.

died and his son Agepan was sent back home to become head of the Zhao's dBon-po confederation. Agepan fought many battles with Song commanders during the Mongol invasion of Sichuan, in battles at Da'an 大安,⁴⁸ Langzhou 閬州,⁴⁹ Lizhou 利州,⁵⁰ Tongchuanfu 潼川,⁵¹ Qingju Mountain 青居,⁵² Chengdufu 成都, Jiadingfu 嘉定,⁵³ and the Taiping fort 太平寨 at Emei 峨眉. As a reward for his victories, Köten bestowed on Agepan golden armor and silver weapons (YS 123.3028).

As hostages, Agepan and Chongxi entered an extremely heterogeneous society in Köten's court. As mentioned, Köten's core army that invaded Sichuan under Taghai Gambo were mostly units detached from Muqali's old North China *tammachi* (permanent garrison) units, already a mix of Mongol, Kitan, Han, and Tangut elements. Köten's own personal *keshtagten* (bodyguard) army was dominated by hostages taken from the Öng'üt Wang 汪 clan and the border Tibetans. Wang Shixian's sons served as commanders of Köten's *a'uruq* or base camp (YS 155.3650, 3654). Li Jie 李節, one of Wang Shixian's subordinates, gave his son Li Qulargi 李忽蘭吉~虎闌箕 as hostage to Köten; Qulargi eventually became commander of the main thousand in Köten's bodyguard and deputy under the Wangs (YS 162.3791, 4.66). Chongxi 重喜, grandson of the Tibetan border chief Zhao Agechang 趙阿哥昌 was sent to Köten's bodyguard as hostage (*wei qinwei* 為親衛), and eventually became the Pacification Commissioner (*Xuanweishi* 宣慰使) for the "Twenty-Four Cities" (YS 123.3029).

The Early Mongol Image of Tibetans

Together these early Mongol interactions with Tibetans on the Amdo frontier defined the Tibetans for the Mongols in ways that differed strikingly from the way Tibetans would be defined later. At one level, the Mongols appear to have continued the earlier medieval practice of seeing the Tibetans as a variety of Turco-Mongolian people. The Middle Mongolian Töböd or Töbed⁵⁴ derives from Old Turkic Tübüt, and associated with the musk deer (al-Kāšyarī 1985: I, 276). As with the Tanguts, who are always seen in Mongol-era Persian sources as a type of Turk, so in Old Turkic sources, the Tibetans are described as "a large tribe in the land of the Turks" (al-Kāšyarī 1985: I, 276). Thus it is not surprising that the iconic "wolf" animal was also attached to the Tibetan name in the term Bōri-Töböd, attested in both the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* and in Plano Carpini.

On the other hand, other viewpoints, according to which the Tibetans were absolutely alien peoples with customs practiced by none of their neighbors also seem to have circulated in

48 In the area of modern Ningqiang 宁强 in far southern Shaanxi province.

49 Present-day Langzhong 阆中 in central Sichuan.

50 Present-day Guangyuan 广元 city in northern Sichuan.

51 Present-day Santai 三台 in central Sichuan.

52 Near present-day Nanchong 南充 city in south-central Sichuan.

53 Modern Leshan 乐山 city in southwestern Sichuan.

54 Both forms are attested; see e.g. Dobu and Zhaonasitu 1996 (line 4) and the *Subhāṣitaratnanidhi* (Bosson 1969: chapter I, 1b).

the early Mongol empire. Although nothing survives that directly attests the Mongols' early impressions of the Tibetans, there are some descriptions which seem to reflect Mongol ideas at second or third hand. To a surprising degree, they are quite negative. Most notorious is the description given in the fifth chapter of John of Plano Carpini's account of the Mongols:

The Burithabets are pagans and who have the most miserable of customs because when someone's father passes away they all gather around their relative and eat him; we were assured that this was true. These people do not have beards; indeed they carry certain piece of iron in hand, as we saw, with which they always pluck out the beard so thoroughly that if by chance any hairs grow in it they are quite misshapen (di Piano Carpini 1996: 61).

The theme of Tibetan ugliness was an old one among their neighbors; indeed in Tang and Dunhuang Chinese sources "ugly aliens" (*fanchou* 蕃醜) was a common term for the Tibetans—the ugliness seems to have referred particularly to their dirtiness and facial tattoos (Wen 2014). The idea of cannibalism, albeit somewhat moderated, is found in William of Rubruck's account:

Beyond them lie the Tebet, a race whose practice was to eat their dead relatives, from the pious motive of providing with no other grave than their own bellies. Nowadays, however, they have abandoned this custom, since every [other] people found them abhorrent. Yet they still make fine goblets out of their relatives' skulls, so that as they drink from these they may not forget them in their enjoyment: this I was told by an eye-witness. Their country is rich in gold, with the result that anyone in need of gold digs until he finds some, takes as much as he requires and puts the rest back in the ground. This is because if he hoarded it or stored it in a coffer, he believes God would deprive him of the rest which is in the ground (William of Rubruck §26.3, trans. Jackson and Morgan 2009: 158-59).

Marco Polo also gives a qualified version of the cannibalism story. After discussing the *bacsi* (*baqshi* or "teachers") of "Tebet" and "Chescemir" (i.e. Tibet and Kashmir) and their magical skills, of which he quite disapproves, he writes:

And these same people of whom I have told you, have such a *beastly and horrible* usage as I shall tell you. For I tell you that when a man is condemned to death and is killed by the government, they take him and have him cooked and eat him; but if he were to die of his own death, they would never eat him (Polo [1938] 1976: 188-89 [§75]).⁵⁵

Here the story of cannibalism is retained, but with a completely different meaning and restrictions, and now attached to the clergy, not the laity..

If Tibetan cannibalism was a stereotype, where did it come from? Plano Carpini and Rubruck explicitly say they heard it from others. Perso-Arabic sources seem to be excluded as their tropes about Tibet are quite different.⁵⁶ In the case of Plano Carpini, the ethnicity of the teller is suggested

55 Text in italics marks material only in the Ramusio edition.

56 See Minorsky 1970: 92-94, 254-63 (§11); Le Strange [1919] 1993: 249. However, Rubruck's story of gold sounds similar to that told of the Zhang-zhung (which omission of punctuation turned to Arabic Rang-rong) in Minorsky 1970: 92-93 (§11.1).

by the form of the name. Burithabet contains the prefix *böri* but in the common Mongolian distortion *büri* “every.” Thabet and Tebet are, however, derived from the Arabo-Persian form of *Tebbet*. It is likely then that while Plano Carpini’s information passed through Persian translators (perhaps via the “Ruthenian clerics” who supplied so much of his information) it would seem to have ultimately derived from local Turko-Mongolian neighbors who would be the only ones to call the Tibetans “Wolf-Tibetans.” Similarly, Rubruck and Polo’s versions of the cannibalism story seem to show a firmly held stereotype of Tibetan cannibalism being forced to undergo transformation as it came in contact with contrary fact. Given the close links of the Zhao family’s dBon-po with Turkic-speaking Öng’üts who were running the “Twenty-Four Cities of Gongchang” and those same Christian Öng’üts own links to the network of East Syriac Christian priests, they may be the source of such stories among Plano Carpini and Rubruck. The beardlessness stressed by Plano Carpini is also mentioned by Marco Polo a propos Silingjiu, although Polo’s account of the appearance of the “idolators” of that region, and especially the beauty of their women is highly positive, and would seem to derive from personal experience (Polo [1938] 1976: 180-81 [§72]).⁵⁷ However, Polo’s positive impression of people of Silingjiu did not extend to the clerics he encountered at the Mongol court whom he found both fascinating and repulsive.

It is also surprising that the Tibetans in this early period are not described as being very Buddhist. Granted, Plano Carpini’s description of the Burithabets and Marco Polo’s description of the people of Silingjiu as “idolaters” should be understood specifically as indicating Buddhism, rather than any native religion.⁵⁸ Rockhill in his commentary to William of Rubruck’s account speculated that the reference to cups made of parents’ skulls may refer to the custom of using skullcaps in Tantric Buddhist rituals. If so, however, it is striking to see that the clerical element has been eliminated and the custom turned into a purely family-based custom. Polo’s version would fit clerical practice better. Yet Xia stereotypes of the Tibetans held that “The Tibetans mostly revere the Buddhas and monks” (Galambos 2011: 101). This Xia image of Tibetans was presumably derived from the dBus-gTsang clerics who served the Xia court. By contrast, the local Tibetans and Qiang of the Kökenuur may be represented by the Xia stereotype, “The ‘lords of the mountains’ love to eat buckwheat” (Galambos 2011: 101). The ‘Lords of the Mountains’ is part of a set of phrases including “Lords of the Steppes,” or the people of Mongolia, “Lords of the East” or the Han, and “Lords of the West” or Tibetans (Galambos 2011: 99-102). Although the exact reference is not directly stated, I think that given Xia geography, the Lords of the Mountains can hardly be other than the people living in what is now Kökenuur and Amdo, as opposed to dBus-gTsang. The Mongol image of “Tibet” in the 1240s and 1250s was not based on the religiously-dominated society of Central Tibet, but rather on the pastoralists and farmers of Kökenuur.

57 Polo writes that “The *honorable* ladies have no hair except on the top of their head; nowhere else have they any hair... they are very well made in all respects.” (Italics mark material from the Ramusio edition.)

58 In medieval Christian and Muslim sources, native religions without written texts (“shamanism,” “animism,” and so on) are not treated as religions at all. “Idolatry” refers only to scriptural religions of Indian or East Asian origin; i.e. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, or Daoism. Of these, only Buddhism can be in question here.

Yet the Mongols had a stronger sense than the Xia of the ethnic unity of the Tibetans as a whole. As I have shown, in their earliest contacts, they used the Turkic term Töböd, which appears to have been seen as being most archetypically referring to the Amdo Tibetans. As they expanded, however, it was extended to the people of Central Tibet. In this light, the *Yuan shi* biography of Zhao Agechang and his descendants has a very interesting description of the family's ancestry.⁵⁹ In this history they are described as the head of the *Duo* 掇 “clan” of the Tübös 土波思-Us-Dzang 烏思臧. Here *Duo* seems to be *mDo*, the regional term for eastern Tibet as used in *A-mDo* or *mDo-smad*. Us-Dzang 烏思臧 is obviously dBus-gTsang, the Tibet term for Central Tibet while Tübös 土波思 is an otherwise unattested Mongolian variant of Töböd “Tibetans,” with a plural in *-s*, not *-d*.⁶⁰ In other words, the biography of the Zhao family, probably written during the middle Yuan dynasty was establishing an equivalence between Tübös and Us-Dzang as two different ways to say Tibetan—the Mongolian way and the Tibetan way.

Conclusion

These images of Tibet and Tibetans, formed on the Amdo border with Tangut kingdom, were eventually superseded by the more expected image of Tibet as a land of lamas, who served as religious preceptors for their Mongol princely patrons. This new image first appeared after the dispatch by Prince Köten of Dor-ta Darqan to Central Tibet in 1240. The story of how Dor-ta Darqan burned the monasteries of Rwa-sgreng and Rgyal-lha-khang and then in 1244 invited Sa-skya Paṇḍita to Köten's court in Ergiuul has been told many times (Wylie 1977; Petech 1990, esp. chapter 2). As scholars have underlined, Mongol interest in the religious figures of Central Tibet developed out of the Tangut institution of imperial preceptors or *dishi* 帝師 (Sperling 1987; Dunnell 1992).

This study has shown, however, that the Mongols were well aware of Amdo Tibetans, whom they sooner or later also identified with the Central Tibetans, from even before the expansion of the Mongol empire. Through their links to the Tangut Xia kingdom, Mongolian-speaking people were early aware of the Tibetans and already in 1226 had begun operating in areas occupied by them. From the 1230s on, ethnic Tibetans were recruited into the Mongol armies and begun campaigning under Mongol command in Sichuan. Long before Köten had ever met Sa-skya Paṇḍita, Tibetans had joined Öng'üts, Han, and Tanguts in key positions among the *keshigten* or hostage bodyguard of Prince Köten. From this perspective, Dor-da Darqan's expeditions to Central Tibet to summon Tibetan clerics and their young relatives as hostages into his entourage was simply a continuation of a trend.

Tibetan religious sources generally focus tightly on the destiny of Buddhist leaders and assume that they were the central figures. So when Prince Qubilai, later to become emperor,

59 The last person recorded in that family biography, Deshou 德壽 was known to have been active in *jia/shen* 甲申 (1344). Thus the last update of the Yuan-era original of this biography probably dates from around that time.

60 On the variation of Mongolian plurals in *-s* and *-d*, see Poppe 1955: 109.

took over Sa-skya Paṇḍita's two nephews nephews, Blo-gros Rgyal-mtshan (later famous as 'Phags-pa Lama) and Phyag-na rdo-rje it has been assumed that Qubilai's primary aim was to secure a lama-preceptor. But summoning rulers to a personal audience and requiring them to bring hostages (son, younger brother, or nephew) were both standard practices of the Mongol empire. The only thing exceptional about this invitation was that Köten felt confident enough to keep them in his own entourage, and not forward them to the emperor.

And when Köten died, his cousin Prince Qubilai temporarily took over not just his religious entourage but his whole *keshigten* army as well. Köten was still alive in the summer of year *ren/zi* (May-Aug, 1252; see *YS* 3.45), but in the following year *gui/chōu* 癸丑 (1253), we see Prince Qubilai, newly appointed as viceroy of North China, making arrangements to reappointed members of the Öng'üt Wang clan and their retainers to positions in the Köten "main thousand" and in the "Twenty-Four Cities." In the same year he also brought Köten's former Tibetan hostage Chongxi 重喜 with him on his campaign against Qarajang (*YS* 162.3791, 123.3029). Evidently with Köten's death, Qubilai assumed acting control over his *keshigten*. Qubilai still controlled it in the early years of his reign, but by Zhiyuan 20 (1283), he had returned it to the control of Köten's son Jibig-Temür (*YS* 12.258).

These facts show that well before the religious nexus of the Mongolia-Tibetan interface took shape, the Tibetans of the Kökenuur were already being incorporated in the Mongol empire. This incorporation was governed by the usual historical trends and practices elsewhere in the empire—the tendency of refugees from one conquest to spill over into more distant realms, thus giving the Mongols a *casus belli*, the occupation of new pastures by Mongol princes, and the demand that those submitting do personal attendance and give hostages. The Mongols also assimilated the prejudicial views which the Tangut and Öng'üt neighbors appear to have harbored towards the Tibetans. Not until decades after the first contact did Buddhism come to dominate the Mongol perception of the Tibetans.

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