

Chapter 3

Diaspora Uyghurs in the Early Mongol Empire

Once the Uyghur *idiqu* threw off his vassal relationship with the Qara Khitai and went over to the Mongols in 1209, he and other members of the Uyghuristan aristocracy were obliged to contribute to the Mongol imperial cause by participating in military campaigns alongside the Mongol troops and by serving as officials and advisors in the civilian sphere. While it is certainly true that the Uyghur *idiqu* was the prime mover in the transfer of allegiance from the Qara Khitai to the Mongols, pulling off the deed required the active participation of other members of the Uyghur aristocracy. The Mongols recognized the involvement of that group in disposing of the Qara Khitai yoke, and as a result, they shared in the glory, honors, and positions of real power showered on the *idiqu* by Chinggis Qan. And like the *idiqu*'s descendants, the exalted status of these men continued to serve as a base of power for their descendants in Mongol China for generations to come. As we shall see, they parleyed their experience and resources into new forms of "capital" that they used to situate themselves as indispensable service personnel in the new empire.

This chapter focuses on the Uyghurs who entered into Mongol service alongside, or as close contemporaries, of the Uyghur *idiqu* Barchuq el-Tegin. In typical nomadic fashion, their service spanned a wide array of civil and military duties. In fact, it is often difficult to differentiate the civilian and military activities that these men carried out as Mongol subjects. This lack of functional specificity in titles and duties, or overlap between spheres, is

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consistent with traditional nomadic organization, and can be seen in the kinds of duties and titles given to the men in Chinggis Qan's personal bodyguard. Certainly in 1209 the Mongols had no concept of civil as distinct from military authority, and none of the *Semuren* in the early decades of Mongol rule can be classified as primarily civil as opposed to military officials. As Frederick Mote has suggested, it is probably more accurate to characterize the first generation of *Semuren* as filling military support roles, as aides in the essentially military government imposed by the Mongols on north China and other areas.¹

Yet even if these men provided mainly military service, it is interesting that the sources highlight the administrative and cultural skills of many of these Uyghurs, underlining the multitude of talents that were required of them. More specifically, these sources make clear that the Uyghurs who were placed in the highest levels of authority were lauded because they knew their native written language well. These Uyghurs should thus be understood as "technicians of writing and literacy," since they wielded a particular kind of technological knowledge, of systems of literacy and administration, that were especially valuable to the nomadic and mainly non-literate Mongols. Defining technology to include types of knowledge is not a new idea, but it does run counter to traditional conceptualizations of technology as merely things or materials, and not knowledge or ideas.² As the examples below will

¹ Frederick Mote, personal communication, Aug., 2003. Igor de Rachewiltz also comments on the lack of distinction between civil and military spheres of authority in the early Mongol empire. See his "Turks in China under the Mongols: A Preliminary Investigation of Turco-Mongol Relations in the 13th and 14th Centuries," in *China Among Equals*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 303–04 n. 46.

² For discussion of this broader definition of technology, see especially Edwin T. Layton, Jr., "Technology as Knowledge," *Technology and Culture* 15 (1974): 31–41; and Rachel Laudan, "Introduction," in *The*

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demonstrate, it is clear that many of the first generation of Uyghurs in Mongol service were seen as technicians of literacy. Since an effective writing system was equally important in organizing civil and military matters, these personnel were particularly valuable at this stage of the Mongol imperial project.

As has been noted already, the Uyghur aristocracy had brought linguistic and cultural skills to bear in ruling their polyethnic and polycultural kingdom in the Tianshan-Tarim Basin area. Not only were they intimately familiar with their own oral and written language, they were also undoubtedly familiar with Chinese, Persian, Mongol, Tibetan, other Turkic, and Western languages, and knew the cultures and administrative systems of those societies as well. The Uyghur socio-political elites were shaped by these experiences, earning a reputation as adroit statesmen and diplomats within a highly cultured, literate and tolerant society. By the time the future Chinggis Qan was consolidating his power among the Mongol tribes and looking to conquer his old steppe rivals, the administrative and linguistic skills and the cultural knowledge the Uyghurs possessed were precisely what he most needed for his nomadic empire. He was quick to recruit Uyghur aristocrats as tutors and administrators even before the Gaochang kingdom submitted to him in 1209.

There is no better example of the value of the intellectual resources of the Uyghurs to the early Mongol empire than the story of Tatar Tongga 塔塔統阿 (fl. 1190s– early 1200s). In 1204, two years before Temüjin's election as grand qan, while he was still consolidating the Mongol tribes around his leadership, he conquered the Naiman, a rival steppe tribe. Along with the strategic and

Nature of Technological Knowledge, ed. Rachel Laudan (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1984), 1–26. I am also indebted to my colleague, Nina Lerman, for helping me develop this analysis of technologists of literacy in the early stages of my research.

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psychological benefits that he gained from that victory, the future Chinggis Qan also gained access to an important set of tools that would be essential to the long-term fate of his empire. Those tools consisted of a set of imperial seals and a writing system, made available to him by the capture of an important Uyghur advisor to the Naiman qan.

Tatar Tongga's story is now well known, but bears repeating here because it demonstrates the activities of Uyghur elites as advisors to foreign courts on matters and techniques of administration and the high regard in which those skills were held by Chinggis Qan.³ Tatar Tongga was serving the Naiman Tayang Qaghan as a secretary in charge of the imperial seals at the time of their conquest by the Mongols. Tatar Tongga tried to flee with those seals, but was captured and brought before Temüjin. The meeting is reported in Tatar Tongga's biography, and reveals a good deal about the values and goals of the future Chinggis Qan.

He was brought before Taizu [Chinggis Qan] ... who said [about Tatar Tongga] "A loyal and filial man!" and then asked him about the seals in his possession and how they were used. Tatar Tongga replied saying "the seals are used when someone is sent out to collect taxes; in each case the official will use it as an official stamp of approval." [Chinggis Qan] was pleased with this, and ordered [Tatar Tongga] to join the ranks of his officials. Later, whenever there was an official edict [he] used seals on them, and he was ordered to be in charge of that.... [Chinggis Qan also] asked him "are you thoroughly familiar with your own written language?" Tatar Tongga replied telling him that he was thoroughly familiar with it, and then

³ Historians have long recognized the importance of Tatar Tongga to Mongol and Yuan history. For the earliest western scholarship on this man, see Jean Pierre Abel-Rémusat, "Tha-Tha-Toung-'O," *Nouveaux Mélanges Asiatiques* 2 (1829): 61–63. For an exhaustive bibliography of sources and scholarship on Tatar Tongga, see Rachewiltz, "Turks in China Under the Mongols," 283–84, 298 n. 9. Tatar Tongga's official biography is located in *Yuanshi* 124.3048–49.

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he was ordered to teach the imperial sons and princes to use the Uyghur script to write Mongolian.⁴

The Gaochang court must have had good working relations with neighboring nomadic tribes like the Naiman, since despite the fact that they were subjects of the Qara Khitai a member of the Uyghur aristocracy was put in charge of the imperial seals for the Naiman qaghan. It is unclear whether Tatar Tongga introduced the technology of seals to the Naiman from Gaochang, or whether they came from other sources, possibly China. In any event, it was a tool that Chinggis Qan knew he needed in his emerging empire. Tatar Tongga also filled an urgent need of the Mongol imperial clan by providing a writing system they could adapt to represent their own spoken language.⁵ Finally, Tatar Tongga's loyalty to his deposed Naiman master was a quality that was honored and respected by Chinggis Qan, as we see in his exclamation about Tatar Tongga's moral character ("A loyal and filial man!" 忠孝人也). As a result, Tatar Tongga served both Chinggis Qan and Ögödei Qan as a treasury official, and his sons and grandson held high offices in China as *Semuren*.

Tatar Tongga heralds a trend that began a few years later when his own *idikut* and fellow countrymen submitted to the Mongols. Like Tatar Tongga, they were experienced in the full gamut of military and civil administration, which served as important forms of cultural capital that helped situate them and their descendants as powerful political elites in the Mongol administration. The stories of this group of Uyghurs reveals a great deal about the ways in which elite status and identity was maintained and

⁴ *Yuanshi* 124.3048.

⁵ For further discussion of Tatar Tongga and his fellow Uyghurs in spreading literacy among the early Mongols, see my article "Uyghur Technologists of Writing and Literacy in Mongol China," *T'oung Pao* 91.4-5 (2005): 396-435.

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reproduced by one diaspora group in the Mongol empire.

The sources identify several prominent fellows of the Uyghur *idiqu* when he submitted to Chinggis Qan in 1209, and who were among the first wave of Uyghur diaspora elites in the Mongol empire. These men actively supported the *idiqu*'s decision to throw off his tributary relationship with the Qara Khitai; some were ringleaders in the actual assassination of the Qara Khitai overseer at the Uyghur court, others served as initial ambassadors to the Mongols, and all of them are reported to have accompanied their leader in turning to the Mongols as subjects. At least one scholar has identified them as a close circle of the *idiqu*'s supporters.⁶ Their affiliation with the *idiqu*, Barchuq el-Tegin, was crucial to their identity and standing as members of the new Mongol administration.⁷ All were

⁶ Li Futong 李符桐, "Weiwuerren duiyu Yuanchao jianguo zhi gongxian" 畏兀兒人對於元朝建國之貢獻 [The contributions of the Uyghurs in the founding of the Yuan Dynasty], in *Shixue lunji* 史學論集 (Taipei: Huagang chubanshe, 1977), 328–98, identifies ten individuals who were explicitly associated with the Uyghur *idiqu* in 1209 and who submitted along with him. I follow Li's assertion of a group identity for these individuals because of this association. Rachewiltz, "Turks in China," identifies thirty-seven Uyghurs who were active in the first decades of Mongol rule of China, from 1200 to 1259, many of whom were also among the group I classify as the first generation of Uyghur service officials. See also Shang Yanbin 尚衍斌, "Yuandai neiqian Weiwuerren de fenbu ji qi dui Han wenhua de xishou" 元代內遣畏兀兒人的分布及其對漢文化的吸收 [Distribution of Uyghurs in Yuan China and their integration into Han culture], *Minzu yanjiu* 1997.1: 64–71. Incidentally, I rely on Rachewiltz's rendering of Uyghur names for many of the individuals I examine here.

⁷ I do not discuss the *idiqu* Barchuq el-Tegin or his family here since he occupied a position more akin to a member of the Mongol royal clan, quite different from other members of the Uyghur aristocracy. The *idiqu* retained his position as head of Uyghuristan after he submitted to the Mongols. His descendants inherited the title and perquisites of that office, and remained in Uyghuristan until Qubilai lost control of the region to the rival Chagadaid Mongols in the 1280s. The *idiqu* was

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given high positions in the Mongol administration under Chinggis Qan. Just as important for our story, however, the honors did not stop with that first generation of the Uyghur diaspora elite in Mongol China. Their descendants inherited high status to continue to enjoy power and prestige as prominent *Semuren* officials through the rest of the time the Mongols ruled China, and even beyond. The following chapters focus on the descendants of the Uyghur elites portrayed in this chapter, and the strategies those families employed to maintain dual identities. We begin with the first generation of Uyghurs in Mongol China.

The First Wave of Uyghur Migrants

We can identify several individuals who were part of the so-called first wave of Uyghur aristocrats inducted into the Mongol empire. There were undoubtedly more men involved in that transition than the sources document, and the individuals discussed here are also just a representative sampling of those whom we do know about. It should also be kept in mind that, while this book focuses on Uyghurs who ended up serving the Mongols in China, others had

more akin to a Mongol prince in other ways as well; Uyghuristan was considered his appanage, he was given a woman from Chinggis's family in marriage, and he was adopted by Chinggis Qan as a "fifth son." For information on Barchuq and following *idiquts* in Mongol China, see Thomas T. Allsen, "The Yuan Dynasty and the Uyghurs of Turfan in the 13th Century," in *China Among Equals*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 243–80; and Luo Xianyou 罗贤佑, "Yuandai Weiwuer yiduhu puxi jiqi diwei bianqian" 元代畏兀儿亦都护谱系及其地位变迁 [Change in status and pedigree of the Uyghur *idiqu* in the Yuan Dynasty], *Minzu yanjiu* 1997.2: 70–80; and Dang Baohai 党宝海, "13, 14 shiji Weiwu'er yiduhu shixi kao" 13, 14 世纪畏兀儿亦都护世系考 [Research on the genealogy of the 13th and 14th century Uyghur *Idiquts*], *Xibei minzu yanjiu* 1998.1: 27–35. Dang's article is especially interesting because he focuses on the *idiqu*s who were brought into China proper after Qubilai Qan lost control of Uyghuristan.

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been dispersed elsewhere in the Mongol empire where they played similar roles to their counterparts in the Chinese territories.

The primary sources specifically comment on their association with the *idikut*, and the fact that with the *idikut* they had turned to follow Chinggis Qan in 1209.⁸ In most cases that meant a literal as well as symbolic following, since the *idikut* and his cohorts were expected to accompany the Mongols on their various military campaigns as subjects who would render the service that the Mongol imperial clan had come to expect from any outer clan or conquered people. While they led troops in battle and were assigned powerful positions over other conquered people, such as judge (C. *duanshiguan*) or agent (*darughachi*), they were also subjects.

One of the first emissaries from the Uyghur court to the Mongols was a man by the name of Dashi 達釋. He is a good example of the role that the cohort of Uyghur aristocrats played in submitting to the Mongols.⁹ What

⁸ This sense of following or turning to the Mongols is expressed by the consistent use of *gui* 歸 (to turn to, follow, return), as in “along with the *idikut* they followed Taizu [Chinggis Qan]” 與亦都護歸太祖 (*yu Iduhu gui Taizu*). Underlining my argument that these men were a cohort, this phrase is limited to the biographies of individuals who had some immediate connection with the *idikut* and his act of submission, and was not a stock phrase common to the biographies of all the important Uyghur *Semuren* in China. It is an important clue to the identity of these individuals and also to their group identity that should not be overlooked.

⁹ Information about Dashi is contained in the official biography of his grandson, Tiegeshu. See *Yuanshi* 135.3271–72; and a genealogical diagram of this family in Qian Daxin 錢大昕, “Yuanshi shizu biao” 元史氏族表 [Table of clans in the Yuan Dynastic History],” in *Ershiwu shi bubian* 二十五史補篇 [Supplements to the Twenty-five Dynastic Histories], 14 vols. (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2005), Vol. 14, 581. See also the later recapitulation of their biography by Tu Ji 屠寄, *Mengwuer shiji* 蒙兀兒史記 [History of the Mongols]

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information we have on Dashi is mainly communicated in the official biography of his grandson, Tiegeshu 鐵哥朮 (Tekechuq, or “little goat”?), the most famous member of the family.

Dashi had a plan to make his fellow countrymen submit [to the Mongols]. [When] Chinggis Qan went west to subdue the Naiman, the *idiqu* was afraid and he gave Dashi some embroidered cloth and a hat trimmed with white sable and commanded him to take them [to Chinggis Qan]. [Then] Dashi knew the Mandate of Heaven had been turned over [to the Mongols], and he urged the *idiqu* to declare himself a vassal in order to preserve the peace in his country. Thus Dashi was given the title of Grand Minister (*shangshu*).¹⁰

This is an interesting account not least because we would expect someone as important as Dashi is portrayed here to show up in other contemporaneous accounts. In fact, we know little about Dashi apart from this brief account. His son, Yelishu 野里朮 (fl. 1219–1230s), was singled out by the Mongols as a military commander of great courage who commanded the loyalty of a large group of warriors. Chinggis Qan, in a bid to win his support, ordered that Yelishu and his men be given 500 horses, and he welcomed Yelishu and his men into his service. This family’s story is a good example of the dual civil/military nature of the Mongol administrative system since Yelishu also served as a secretary to a certain Mongol Prince Anzhitai, and led troops in battle in 1219 and 1232 against the Jurchen Jin dynasty.

Yelishu’s eldest son, Tiegeshu, continued the family

(Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1962), 119. I will comment on these sources below.

¹⁰ *Yuanshi* 135.3271. Was Dashi’s prescience real or supplied later by his descendants to the writers of this account? It is impossible to know.

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tradition of distinguished military and civilian service to the Mongols. In 1277 a rebellion occurred in Shandong and troops were assembled in a great hurry. Tiegeshu achieved prominence because he was able to keep an exact accounting of the numbers of troops and supplies mustered for this campaign by using the Uyghur writing system. Qubilai Qan was impressed with his abilities and assigned Tiegeshu the position of agent (*darughachi*) in north China. He was eventually awarded the honorary civil title of Grandee of the Thirteenth Class (*jiayi dafu*) by the Yuan court, and died in 1299 at an unspecified age.¹¹

By the time the fourth generation of this family had served the Mongols, exemplified in the career of Tiegeshu's grandson, Qaishou 海壽, most of them had lost their identification with the military life and taken on civilian roles as *Semuren* officials.¹² They had also come to be identified as Chinese-style literati. Qaishou is best known as an agent (*darughachi*) in Hangzhou. When his grandfather died in 1299, in good Chinese fashion Qaishou retired from official position to mourn his grandfather's death. And after his own death the Yuan court awarded him the important posthumous titles Hanlin Auxiliary Academician (*Hanlin zhi xueshi*), Marquis of Fanyang Prefecture (*Fanyang junhou*), and the posthumous style name Kind and Intelligent (*Hui Min*).¹³

Another example of a Uyghur aristocrat who entered Mongol service alongside his *idiqu* is Sevinch

¹¹ For a complete list of the 42 levels of honorary official civil titles granted to persons of outstanding merit during the period of Mongol rule of China, see Farquhar, *Government of China Under Mongolian Rule*, 24–26.

¹² It would be interesting to know the eventual fate of the military troops attached to this family, and whether they were hereditarily attached to Dashi's clan, but the sources do not comment on this issue.

¹³ *Yuanshi* 135.3272.

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Toghril 小雲石脫忽憐 (fl. 1200–1230s).¹⁴ Before submission to the Mongols, he had been an *uluy ayyuchi* in his native Uyghuristan, the equivalent of the Chinese term grand minister (*dachen*).¹⁵ This was apparently a hereditary position, since his father, Tegin Bilge Quti 的斤必里傑忽提, was also an *uluy ayyuchi* there.¹⁶ Sevinch Toghril is another example of the hybrid civil-military nature of the early Mongol administration since he is noted for leading troops alongside Chinggis Qan on military campaign in the west against the Khwarazm kingdom, and for his role as a judge (*duanshiguan*) at Tolui's wife's appanage lands in Zhending, north China, after his return from that campaign.¹⁷ As a judge, he would have had wide-ranging authority over the local population who were now part of

¹⁴ Yuan era sources that document the history of this individual and his family include official biographies in *Yuanshi* 134.3262–63; a tomb inscription for Sevinch's great-great-grandson, Erincin 亦輦真 (1296–1347), written by the famous Chinese writer Huang Jin 黃潛, “Liaoyang dengchu xing Zhongshusheng zuocheng Yinianzhen gong shendaobei” 遼陽等處行中書省左承亦輦真公神道碑 [Spirit way inscription for Master Erincin, Minister on the Left of Liaoyang and other Branch Secretariats], *Jinhua Huang xiansheng wenji* 金華黃先生文集 [Collected works of Huang Jin] (Sibu congkan ed.; rpt. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1922) 24.15a–18b; and later versions of family biographies in *Xin Yuanshi* 136.15b–17a; and *Mengwuer shiji* 37.7, 45.10ff. On the rendering of the name Xiaoyunshi as Sevinch, see Francis Woodman Cleaves, “A Chancellery Practice of the Mongols in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 14 (1951): 514–15.

¹⁵ I am indebted to Thomas Allsen for providing a rendering of Sevinch Toghril's name and transliteration of his Uyghur title. On the term *ayyuchi*, see Volker Rybatzki, *Die Toñuquq-Inschrift* (Szeged: University of Szeged, 1997), 92 n. 243.

¹⁶ His father's name is given by Huang Jin, *Jinhua Huang Xiansheng wenji* 24.15a.

¹⁷ Ögödei Qan gave the territories of Zhending 真定 Prefecture in modern Hebei to Tolui's widow, Sorqaqtani Beki (d. 1256), in 1236, to honor his late brother.

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that appanage, dispensing justice, collecting taxes, and maintaining order in the name of Tolui. His descendants lived in China for at least four generations after him, where they occupied relatively high-level positions as *Semuren* officials in the Yuan central secretariat and various branch secretariats.

Orun Arslan Duda 玉龍阿思蘭都大 is another Uyghur who was involved in the *idiqu*'s submission to the Mongols as an envoy.¹⁸

In 1209 Orun accepted the *idiqu*'s order and went to meet Chalahuotchi and others [Mongols] to proclaim [the *idiqu*'s] victory over the Merkid Qutuq, whom he had defeated in battle at Jiaohe. [Chinggis Qan] said to him, “since this is the case, you should return to the *idiqu* and tell him [of my favorable decree] and then return with a gift of local items.” Orun replied “may the qan prosper and have pity on my king. As for me, how can I dare to present anything to you.” Then he returned to the *idiqu* with the decree and the *idiqu* sent Qara Arslan Duda [Orun's son] to offer valuable items and a bundle of woven

¹⁸ The only Yuan-era source that documents this individual is a post-mortem inscription written for his grandson Ata Qaya. See Xu Youren 許有壬, “Da Yuan guzeng Guanglu dafu Jiangzhe dengchu xing zhongshusheng pingzhang zhengshi zhuguo zhuifeng Zhaoguogong Aduhayagong shendao beiming” 大元故贈光祿大夫江浙等處行中書省平章政事柱國追封趙國公阿都哈雅公神道碑銘 [Spirit way inscription for Master Adu Qaya, who was posthumously bestowed the titles Grandee of the Third Class, Grand Councilor of Jiangzhe and other branch secretariats, the dignitary title Pillar of the State, and the posthumous enfeoffment of Duke of Zhao in the Great Yuan Dynasty], *Guitang xiaogao* 圭塘小稿 [Collected works of Xu Youren] (Siku quanshu ed.; rpt. Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1983) 10.10a–13a. The same inscription, but with slightly different renderings of personal names, including Aleitanhaya 阿勒坦哈雅 instead of Aduhaya, is in Xu Youren, *Zhi Zheng ji* 49.5. Later renditions of this family's biography can be found in *Xin Yuanshi* 136.8b–9a; and Tu Ji, *Mengwuer shiji* 45.8b–9a. The first part of his name, Orun, means “high place” or “throne” in Turkic.

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gold brocade. Thus Uyghuristan turned to and allied with [the Mongols]. Then Qara Arslan Duda managed affairs for Chinggis Qan, he was inducted into the qan's bodyguard, and accompanied the qan on a military campaign against the Jin where he died.¹⁹

It is not clear why Orun was not himself sent back to the Mongol camp with the Uyghur *idikut's* gifts to seal the transfer of Uyghur loyalties to the Mongols, but the fate of his son, Qara Arslan Duda 哈刺阿思蘭都大, was typical for family members of prominent men of subject states. He was kept in the Mongol camp as a member of the qan's personal bodyguard, where he served the qan in both civil and military affairs. The family continued to serve the Mongols in this vein for several generations. For example, Qara Arslan Duda's son, Ata Qaya 阿塔海牙, began his career also as a member of the qan's personal bodyguard, and then was sent as an officer in charge of a military colony. Ata Qaya's son, Arslan Qaya 阿思蘭海牙, on the other hand, does not seem to have been a military man, but served most of his career as an official in the censorate, one of the civilian bureaus of Yuan government. Family members for two more generations are recorded in the Yuan sources, most continuing the pattern of prominent *Semuren* officials, where they were inducted into the qan's personal bodyguard and then moved on into rather high level administrative positions in China.

Another member of this cohort, Mengsus 孟速思 (1206–1267), caught the attention of the Mongols because of his intellectual abilities.²⁰ He came from a prominent

¹⁹ *Xin Yuanshi* 136.8b.

²⁰ This name is an odd form for Uyghur, and may be rendered as Mengsüz, “without eyebrows,” or Mengisüz, “without joy.” Peter Golden, personal communication. Sources for the history of this family include two funerary inscriptions for a son of Mengsus – see Cheng

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Uyghur clan that lived in the capital city Beshbaliq, where his father was a governor (*dutong* 都統) of his region. Mengsus was admitted into the Mongol administration because he was skilled in the Uyghur writing system. Known in his youth for precocious abilities, Mengsus was just the kind of individual that Chinggis Qan needed in his emerging empire. After 1209 he was put in charge of collecting taxes on the appanage lands of one of the Mongol princes:

By age 15 he was thoroughly familiar with his native written script [*jintong benguó shu* 盡通本國書]. Chinggis Qan heard about him and commanded him to appear before him. Upon first seeing him he was pleased. He [Chinggis Qan] said “This young man is full of energy [lit. ‘has fire in his eyes’], and he will be of great use [to us].” Chinggis Qan ordered him to go and serve the Prince Tolui [and] he was put in charge of annual taxation at Zhending.²¹

Appanage holdings were important sources of revenue for the Mongol imperial princes, and Mengsus’s appointment as manager of tax income on the appanage holdings of Tolui’s wife, Sorqaqtani Beki, put him in

Jufu 程鉅夫 (1249–1318), “Wudu Zhiminwang shude zhi bei” 武都智敏王述德之碑 [Inscription for transmitting the virtue of the Prince of Wudu, Zhimin], *Xuelou ji* 雪樓集 [Collected works of Cheng Jufu] (rpt. Taipei: National Central Library, 1970) 6.9a–12b; and “Wudu Zhongjianwang shendaobei” 武都忠簡王神道碑 [Spirit way inscription for Prince of Wudu, Zhongjian], *Xuelou ji* 7.4a–7a; and Mengsus’s official biography in *Yuanshi* 124.3059. Later versions are found in *Xin Yuanshi* 136; and Tu Ji, *Mengwuer shiji* 45. See also Herbert Franke’s article on Mengsus based on the two above-mentioned funerary inscriptions, “A Sino-Uighur Family Portrait: Notes on a Woodcut from Turfan,” *The Canada-Mongolia Review* 4.1 (1978): 33–40.

²¹*Yuanshi* 124.3059.

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contact with the highest level of Mongol princes.²² Mengsus became an informal advisor to Qubilai while still under Tolui's employment, and his first wife, Ketelün 怯牒倫, was a younger sister to Qubilai Qan's wife, Čabi. He was thus very well connected with the Mongol imperial house. After his elevation to grand qan, Qubilai wanted to promote Mengsus to the office of chancellor but he declined the offer. When Mengsus died, Čabi herself donated money for Mengsus's burial site!

Mengsus had eleven sons and four daughters by two wives and a concubine, and his descendants continued the pattern he had set by serving in positions that utilized their high level of literacy.²³ For example, several of his sons and grandsons were appointed officials in the prestigious Hanlin Academy. The career of one of his sons, Ašigh Temür 阿失帖木兒 (1249–1309), provides an especially vivid example of the ways in which Uyghurs served the Mongols in a wide variety of capacities, in both civil and military spheres.

²² Uyghurs such as Mengsus were often assigned as officials in charge of Mongol appanage holdings, since they were literate and could make sure that tax and other incomes were collected on a regular basis. As the official in charge of annual taxation at Tolui's appanage, Mengsus would also, presumably, have had real power over the local population who resided on the appanage lands, and may also have been able to suggest, if not arrange, how that income would be used by the prince's household. On the Mongol appanage system (C. *touxia*, M. *ayimagh*), see Paul Ratchnevsky, "Zum Ausdruck 't'ouhsia' in der Mongolenzeit," in *Collectanea Mongolica: Festschrift für Professor Dr. Rintchen zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Walther Heissig (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1966), 173–91; and Farquhar, *Government of China*, 17–18, 59 n. 6.

²³ For a summary of this family's genealogy, see Qian, "Yuanshi shizubiao," in *Ershiwu shi bubian*, Vol. 14, 571. We are also fortunate to have a visual representation of several members of this family in a type of family portrait. See Annemarie von Gabain, "Ein Chinesisch-Uigurischer Blockdruck," in *Tractata Altaica*, ed. Walther Heissig, John R. Krueger, F. J. Oines and E. Schütz (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1976), 203–10.

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Ašigh Temür began his career with induction into the personal bodyguard of Qubilai's son, Prince Jingim, and accompanied him on the military campaign against southern Song in 1278. Because of his meritorious service in that campaign, Ašigh Temür was made a secretary in the Yuan Military Affairs Bureau (*shumiyuan dushi*). Prince Jingim's wife then summoned him to teach her sons, Temür and Kamala, the Uyghur script, a significant achievement since Temür would succeed Qubilai as emperor in 1294. In 1298 Ašigh Temür was appointed to his first position in the Hanlin Academy and ordered to teach Prince Qaišan the Uyghur script. When Qaišan was made emperor in 1308, he promoted Ašigh Temür to the position of chancellor of the Hanlin Academy, concurrent with the position of a recipient of edicts, or director, in the Hanlin and Historiography Academy (*Hanlin Guoshiyuan chengzhi*). Thus, he taught two Yuan emperors his native Uyghur script!²⁴

Mengsus and his family are good examples of the breadth of resources and skills that Uyghurs possessed and used as diaspora people within the Mongol empire. Their story also reveals the slow evolution of separate civil and military spheres of authority, which only really started during the reigns of Möngke and Qubilai and was still far from complete even by the end of Qubilai's reign. There was no inconsistency in calling on Ašigh Temür, essentially a military man, to teach members of the Mongol imperial clan his native Uyghur writing system. In keeping with nomadic tradition, any member of the qan's bodyguard could be asked to perform tasks that were either civil or military in nature. His duties were based on his skills, not on his functional title as a civil or military official. It is also interesting to note that the Uyghur script was still important long after it had been replaced by the

²⁴ See Franke, "Sino-Uighur Family Portrait," 38, for Ašigh Temür.

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Tibetan 'Phags-pa script as the official writing system.

Finally, this family is also a good example of the multicultural leanings of many Uyghurs who came to live in China as *Semuren*. On the basis of unusual visual documentation, we know that Mengsus and his family were devout Buddhists. At the same time, the names of members of this family combine Chinese, Turkic, Tibetan and Mongolian elements, no doubt a result of the wide-ranging marriage alliances established by this family. For example, Mengsus's first wife was a Mongolian princess and his second wife a Uyghur. Admittedly, those marriages were as much about fostering and cementing political and social ties with the Mongol political elite and other prominent *Semuren* (such as the link between Mengsus's line and the Uyghur Lian family, described below) as they were about cultural interest or attraction. But they do show the acceptance by this Uyghur family of persons of other ethnic origins and religious persuasions.

The next members of this group of aristocrats who were associated with the Uyghur *idikut*, Qara Īghach Buyruq, Buyruq Qaya, and Bilge Buqa, show the same career patterns as the men we have just described. They differ from those cases, however, because we have a wider variety of sources that provide a window onto the larger scale process of elite production in Yuan China. This allows us to see not only how this cohort of Uyghur elite integrated into the nascent Mongol administration, but also how later generations of Uyghur *Semuren* adapted their strategies of survival to fit the changes that took place as the Mongols incorporated south China into their empire, and gradually isolated China away from the rest of the Mongol empire. These examples also illustrate concomitant changes in the Mongol administration of China, especially the growing distinction between civil and military spheres of authority, and how the Uyghur *Semuren* adapted to that change. The rest of this chapter examines the lives and

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careers of Qara Īghach Buyruq, Buyruq Qaya, and Bilge Buqa, while studies of their descendants, all of whom were part of the important *Semuren* status group, follow.

Qara Īghach Buyruq (*Halayihachibeilu* 哈刺亦哈赤北魯, fl. 1190s–1220s) is a good example of the kind of Uyghur aristocrat who went over to the Mongols. His story also sheds some light on the relationships the Uyghur court had with its near neighbors.²⁵ Qara Īghach first appears in Chinese records during the reign of the Uyghur *idikut* Esen Temür (月仙帖木兒, fl. 1190s, father of Barchuq el-Tegin), where he is described as being very intelligent and versed in all customs and affairs of his state and his people. He was assigned by Esen Temür to be a judge (*duanshiguan*) in the state of Sayram, a tributary of Gaochang located in present-day Xinjiang, between Kucha and Aksu.²⁶ Duties included acting as a general overseer and representative of the Uyghur court, with wide-ranging authority in matters of state. While Sayram was not a major power in Central Asia, Qara Īghach's stationing there indicates the Uyghurs continued to hold some authority over areas that had presumably been subsumed into the Qara Khitai kingdom.

Sometime after his assignment to Sayram, the last

²⁵ Sources for this individual and his family include his official biography in *Yuanshi* 124.3046–48; entries in Yang Yu 楊瑀, *Shanju xinhua* 山居新話 [Collected works of Yang Yu] (rpt. Taipei: Yiwen Press, 1966), 7b–8a, translated into German by Herbert Franke, *Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Chinas unter der Mongolenherrschaft: Das Shan-kü sin-hua des Yang Yü* (Wiesbaden: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1956), 66; Tao Zongyi, *Chuogeng lu* 2; and Li Chong 李翀, *Riwen lu* 日聞錄 [Collected works of Li Chong] (Taipei: Yiwen Press, 1968).

²⁶ On Sayram, see Peter B. Golden, “Sayrām,” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, new edition, 11 vols. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), Vol. 9, 114–15; Feng Chengjun 馮承鈞, *Xiyu Diming* 西域地名 [Placenames of Western Regions] (Taiwan: Huashi chubanshe, 1976), 62; and Bretschneider, *Medieval Researches*, Vol. 2, 94–95.

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Qara Khitai *gürkhan* Zhilugu invited Qara Īghach to “go [to his court] and serve as a tutor to his sons,” most likely teaching them the Uyghur language and script since it was an important means of communication in the area.²⁷ Since Qara Īghach continued to hold the office of judge in his new posting to the Qara Khitai capital, he was undoubtedly still considered a representative of the now-subordinate Uyghur court, and he may, in fact, have been a high-level hostage. Thus, the Qara Khitai had many reasons for requisitioning him to their capital.

The sources do not tell us how long Qara Īghach served at the Qara Khitai court, or the exact nature of his duties, but we know that his family in Uyghuristan was involved in events that led to the break with the Qara Khitai in 1209. When the next *idiqu*, Barchuq, had the Qara Khitai overseer killed, he sent Qara Īghach’s son-in-law and three other prominent Uyghurs to “serve” at the Qara Khitai court. This mission was presumably intended to allay, however temporarily, the Qara Khitai reaction to the *idiqu*’s actions while at the same time announcing his intentions to the *gürkhan*. The text then says that Qara Īghach’s son-in-law told Qara Īghach of the events back home and that Qara Īghach subsequently accompanied the other Uyghurs in submitting and turning to Chinggis Qan. The turn of events implies that this was a carefully staged action on the part of the *idiqu* and the Uyghur political elites.

Sometime after 1209, Chinggis Qan drafted Qara Īghach’s son, Ödüş Inal 月朵失野訥, into his personal bodyguard, and Qara Īghach accompanied Chinggis Qan in his military campaigns in the western regions (presumably against the Qara Khitai and the Khwarazmshah). Thus began Ödüş Inal’s impressive career as a service official. When the Mongols passed through Uyghuristan on their

²⁷ *Yuanshi* 124.3046. See also Wittfogel and Feng, *Liao*, 670.

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way west, Chinggis Qan left Ödüş Inal there as an agent (*darughachi*) in charge of Dushan City 獨山城, located just east of the Uyghur capital city Beshbaliq. He was in charge of civilian and military affairs there, and his authority as a representative of the new Mongol regime was secured by the fact that he was bestowed the high Chinese and Mongol hereditary official titles *dudu* (T. *tutuq*, “commander-in-chief”) and *darqan* (C. *dalahan*, “free noble”), and the prestigious Golden Tiger Tablet (*jinhufu*) to wear. Qara Īghach’s descendants continued to serve as agents for the Mongols in Uyghuristan for two more generations, moving to China proper only when Qubilai lost control of the region to his Chaghadaid rivals. We will take up the story of his *Semuren* descendants in the next chapter.

Buyruq Qaya 布魯海牙 (1197–1265), progenitor of the well-known Lian 廉 family, came from another prominent Uyghur family in Beshbaliq.²⁸ His father, Qitay

²⁸ Sources that document the history of this family include Buyruq Qaya’s official biography, *Yuanshi* 125.3070–72; official biographies of two of his sons, Lian Xixian at *Yuanshi* 126.3085–97 and Lian Qashan Qaya at *Yuanshi* 145.3447–48; and Lian Xixian’s funerary inscription written by Su Tianjue 蘇天爵, “Pingzhang zhengshi Lian Wenzhengwang shendaobei” 平章政事廉文正王神道碑 [Spirit-way inscription for Prince Lian Wenzheng, Privy Councillor], *Yuan wenlei* 元文類 [Anthology of Yuan literature (also known as *Guochao wenlei* 國朝文類)] (Siku Quanshu ed.; rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993) 65.1a–16b. Important secondary scholarship includes the biography of Lian Xixian by Ch’i-ch’ing Hsiao, “Lien Hsi-Hsien (1231–1280),” in *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yuan Period*, ed. Igor de Rachewiltz, Hok-lam Chan, Hsiao Ch’i-ch’ing and Peter W. Geier (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1993), 480–99; and Wang Meitang 王梅堂, “Yuandai neiqian Weiwuerzu shijia – Lianshi jiazhu kaoshu” 元代內遷維吾爾族世家 – 廉氏家族考述 [Distribution of Uyghur aristocratic families in Yuan Dynasty – a study of the Lian family] (unpublished paper for Yuan Dynasty History Conference, Hong Kong, 1997). For a complete listing of the primary sources that document the Lian family during the Yuan,

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Qaya 吉臺海牙 (fl. early 1200s), and grandfather, Yarp Qaya 牙兒八海牙 (fl. 1180s?), had both served as officials at the Uyghur court. His father died when Buyruq Qaya was just a child, and we are told that “he went to stay with his uncle’s family and then studied, and after awhile he became skilled in his native writing system, and even more skilled in riding horses and shooting arrows (*jishan qi guoshu*, *youjing qishe* 即善其國書，尤精騎射).”²⁹ When he was only eighteen years of age he accompanied the *idikut* in submitting to the Mongols, and was inducted into Chinggis Qan’s bodyguard right away. Buyruq then accompanied Chinggis Qan on his military campaign against the Qara Khitai, where he distinguished himself in battle. As a result, Chinggis Qan rewarded him with a felt tent and a woman from the Shimo 石抹 clan, the Qara Khitai *gürkhan*’s consort clan.

After Chinggis Qan died, Buyruq Qaya received the most important promotion of his life. He was sent to Yanjing (燕京, the old Jin capital and site of the future Yuan capital Dadu) as an official in charge of monetary affairs (*zongli caibi*), and it was while he was stationed there that Tolui’s wife, Sorqatani Beki, heard about him and petitioned Ögödei Qan to have him sent to serve her. According to his biography, she had heard he was a careful official, but mastery of his native written language and military skills were also undoubtedly points in his favor, since he was put in charge of civil and military households in Yanjing and Zhongshan, both in present-day Hebei, and

see the listings for Lian family members in Wang Deyi, 王德毅, Li Rongcun 李榮村, and Pan Bochong 潘柏澄, eds., *Yuanren zhuanji ziliao suoyin* 元人傳記資料索引 [Index to biographical materials of Yuan persons], 5 vols. (Taipei: Xinwenshuang chubanshe, 1980); and Rachewiltz and Wang, ed., *Repertory of Proper Names in Yüan Literary Sources*, 1247–50.

²⁹ *Yuanshi* 125.3070.

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was subsequently elevated to the position of agent (*darughachi*) in charge of her appanage lands in Zhending. Appointed to these positions in 1229 or 1230, early in Ögödei's reign, in 1231 he was further elevated to the important positions of investigation commissioner (*lianfang shi*) and judge (*duanshiguan*) of Yunnan Prefecture 燕南路. He was given the prestigious Golden Tiger Tablet to wear, and his biography makes clear that he wielded considerable power over the local population.³⁰ When Qubilai became qaghan in 1260 he kept Buyruq Qaya on as an official at Zhending, and in the following year was elevated to the position of director of the Bureau of Agriculture. The reader will remember that another prominent Uyghur, Mengsus, also served Sorqaqtani Beki at Zhending, and they must have overlapped since Buyruq Qaya served the Mongols at Zhending in one capacity or other for close to thirty years.

Buyruq Qaya's service in the house of Tolui put him in touch with Tolui's sons and future qans, Möngke and Qubilai, which gave a substantial boost to the careers of many of his numerous descendants, all of whom were known by the Chinese-style surname Lian (see next chapter for further discussion of this family). His ties to other prominent Uyghurs were also sustained during his long career, especially via his contacts with Mengsus, for one of his sons, Lian Xixian, married a daughter of Mengsus.

The last example of an early Uyghur aristocrat we shall consider in this chapter is the Uyghur chief minister Bilge Buqa 比俚伽普華 (also known as Bilge Temür 帖穆爾, fl. early 1200s).³¹ He too came from a prominent

³⁰ Regarding Mongol imperial insignia such as the Golden Tiger Tablet, see Rachewiltz, "Personnel and Personalities," 90.

³¹ The sources that document the history of Bilge Buqa and his descendants are, if anything, even more numerous than those pertaining to Buyruq Qaya, and will be described in more detail below. For an exhaustive list of those sources, see Michael C. Brose, "Strategies of

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Uyghur family, and he, more than any other person in the *idikut*'s inner circle, was directly involved in the Uyghur submission to the Mongols. For that reason, as well as the other intellectual resources his family commanded, he and his descendants were well treated by the Mongols.

Bilge Buqa's grandfather, Kezhipuer 克直普爾 (fl. early 1100s), is the first family member recorded in Uyghuristan. He was State Minister (*Guoxiang* 國相), a position just below the *idikut* himself in rank and importance, and held the honorific titles of Free Noble (*Darqan* 答刺罕) and Elder Statesman (*Ata Tutuq* 阿大都督).³² Kezhipuer also spent time at the Liao court representing the Uyghur kingdom, where "the Liao king conferred [on Kezhipuer] the titles of Grand Preceptor (*Taishi* 太師), Grand Counselor-in-Chief (*Da Chengxiang* 大丞相), and he was put in charge of the storehouses in the Capital and other Regions (*Zongguan Neiwei Zangshi* 總管內外藏事)."³³ His career provides striking evidence of the

Survival: Uyghur Elites in Yuan and Early Ming China," Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2000.

³² The latter were aristocratic titles conferred by the Uyghur *idikut*. *Darqan* was an inherited title originally conferred for "military merit, the title gave the grantee freedom from many of the customary obligations owed to his superior"; Farquhar, *Government of China*, 30. Also see Han Rulin, "Menggu dalahan kao" 蒙古答刺罕考 [A study of the Mongol Darqan], in *Qionglu ji* 穹廬集 [Collected works of Han Rulin], Ershi shiji Zhongguo shixue mingzhe 二十世纪中国史学名著 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei Education Press, 2000), 23–53. *Dudu* (Turk. *Tutuq*) is one of the oldest examples of Chinese administrative terms borrowed by the Türks and passed on to the Uyghurs, and meant "military governor of a province, [or] leader of high rank"; Ecsedy, "Old Turkic Titles of Chinese Origin."

³³ Ouyang Xuan 歐陽玄, "Gaochang Xieshi jiazhuang" 高昌偃氏家傳 [History of the Xie clan of Gaochang], in *Guizhai wenji* 圭齋文集 [Collected works of Ouyang Xuan] (Sibu congkan ed.; rpt. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1929) 11.4b. I will have more to say about this important source below. The Chinese honorary title *taishi* was adapted

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important roles that Uyghur elites played in foreign, neighboring states. We know very little about the next two generations of this family other than that they continued to inherit the Uyghur offices attributed to Kezhipuer. But this family certainly distinguished itself in the later Bilge Buqa and his younger brother, Eren Temür, both contemporaries of the Uyghur *idiqu* Barchuq el-Tegin.

Bilge Buqa's father apparently died prematurely, since Bilge inherited the offices of State Minister and Free Noble at the relatively young age of sixteen. It was about this same time that the Qara Khitai sent the Buddhist monk Seng to Gaochang as their agent and representative, and the sources portray Bilge as leading the charge to get rid of him. We are told that the *idiqu* voiced his discontent about the overseer to Bilge, and that Bilge was the one who suggested he be assassinated so that the Uyghurs would be free to switch their allegiance to the Mongols. Accordingly, Bilge led soldiers to attack the agent, and then chased him up into a building, cut off the agent's head, and threw it down to the ground.³⁴ This occurred in 1209.

The *idiqu* rewarded Bilge for his actions with an honorific style name (*hao*) of Bilge Qutï 比俚伽忽底 ("His Highness Bilge") and the presumably honorary title

by northern nomadic confederations as early as the Liao, and the importance of the office was undoubtedly due to the power of literate personnel. See Henry Serruys, "The Office of *Tayisi* in Mongolia in the Fifteenth Century," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 37 (1977): 353–80.

³⁴ Juvaini records a slightly different account of these events, in which Bilge is not named and where Uyghur troops pulled down the house of Overseer Seng. See Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, 44–45. Also see the account by Wang Guowei cited in Wittfogel and Feng, *Liao*, 651. It is impossible to determine if Ouyang's account, in which Bilge is named as the director of this operation, is the more accurate of the two accounts, or whether Ouyang was provided this "information" by later family members.

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Mingbieji 明別吉.³⁵ Bilge then accompanied the *idiqu* in submitting to the Mongols, and was rewarded by Chinggis Qan in turn, with numerous material gifts and symbols of Mongol imperial authority. He was “given the gold tiger tablet to wear (*jinhufu*), a silver seal with an embossed lion (*shiniu yinyin*), a gold dragon chair (*jinchiyi*), a robe of gold-embroidered cloth (*jinzhisun*), the dedicated service of four Mongol military officers (*xiaowei siren*), food and drink were set out for him almost as if he were part of the qan’s family, and he was given [control over] the food resources of 23 villages and 50,000 *liang* of silver.”³⁶ This is an impressive list of honors, and indicates the esteem in which Bilge was held.

Bilge Buqa seems to have remained in Uyghuristan after he went over to the Mongols, probably continuing to hold the same offices under the *idiqu* that he had held before 1209. Curiously, we only know about this part of his career from the Persian historian Juvaini, who reports that the same Bilge Qutī who had been one of the chief instigators of the assassination of the Qara Khitai agent to the Uyghurs was also involved in a plot in 1252 to kill all Muslims in Gaochang.³⁷ The Chinese sources simply state

³⁵ For the reconstruction and meaning of the honorific title *qutī* bestowed on Bilge, see Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, 48 n. 4. I have not been able to reconstruct a reading or meaning of *Mingbieji*.

³⁶ Ouyang Xuan, *Guizhai wenji* 11.6a. A similar list, minus a few items, is given in the official biography of Bilge’s younger brother, Eren Temür. See *Yuanshi* 124.3050. The Golden Tiger Tablet, one of the highest symbols of Mongol imperial authority, was complemented by the silver emblem and the chair, both also important symbols of royal authority and prerogative. The robe made out of expensive gold brocade was a highly prized item in nomadic circles, and also a symbol of imperial pleasure and acceptance. See Thomas T. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 20, for a discussion of the significance of the *zhisun* robe.

³⁷ Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, 48–53. Juvaini’s history is an important contemporaneous source for information on the early

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that he became ill and died. The Uyghur *idiqu* at the time, Salindī, was also apparently involved in this plot, which seems to have been aimed at Möngke's authority in Uyghuristan, and the Mongols acted with characteristic swiftness in this matter. After bringing everyone involved to the court, and obtaining confessions from the *idiqu* and the other Uyghurs, they were all executed, including Bilge, in 1253.

Bilge's younger brother, Eren Temür 岳璘帖穆爾, was also part of the Uyghuristan elite who followed the *idiqu* in submitting to the Mongols. His younger cousin, Sergius (Sajisi 撒吉思), seems to have followed in Eren Temür's footsteps when he was inducted into Mongol service and so we shall consider both of these men in this chapter. Eren Temür was also the ancestor of the Xie family that will be the subject of following chapters. Their stories provide us with yet another glimpse into the politics of the Mongol imperial clan.

Eren Temür's reputation and early career in service to the Mongols indicate the trajectory that he and his extended family would follow as *Semuren* officials and Uyghur elites in Mongol China. According to one source, he was "well versed in his native Uyghur writing system [*weiwu shu* 偉兀書], he magnanimously took what he got because of his rank, calculated his wealth and gave it to his

Mongol empire. He began work on his history in 1234, much of it based on what he personally witnessed in the Mongol empire, including two trips to the Mongol steppe capital Qarakhorum. While Juvaini's history does not contain the kind of biographical detail found in the Chinese biographies, he does include some information on individuals, such as Bilge, not recorded in any Chinese source. Juvaini also paid particular attention to the Uyghurs; he includes accounts of the origins of the Uyghur people, the circumstances surrounding their submission to Chinggis Qan, and later events that involved prominent Uyghurs.

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family members, and withheld nothing for himself.”³⁸ He followed his older brother, Bilge, in swearing allegiance to the Mongols, and then was inducted into Chinggis Qan’s personal bodyguard. At age 15 he accompanied Chinggis Qan on military campaigns, and according to the sources fought in many battles and won considerable merit for his bravery. When Chinggis Qan’s youngest brother, Temüge Odchigin, was seeking a tutor, the qan sent Eren to him “to direct the studies of all the Prince’s sons, teaching that the most important character of a man is that a filial younger brother should be cordial and friendly, virtuous and sincere, and should avoid killing.”³⁹ This probably occurred at Temüge’s appanage lands in Yidu 益都 in eastern Shandong, where Eren was not only a tutor to the prince’s family but was also put in charge of his appanage when the prince was away.⁴⁰

Eren settled in at Yidu, marrying a local woman of the Jurchen Aotun 奥屯 clan, a prominent family that had

³⁸ Ouyang Xuan, “Gaochang Xieshi jiazhuan,” *Guizhai wenji* 11.6a. Curiously, these attributes are only reported here, and not in Eren’s official *Yuanshi* biography.

³⁹ The text reads, 訓導諸王子以孝弟敦睦，仁厚不殺爲第一義 in both Ouyang Xuan, *Guizhai wenji* 11.6a, and *Yuanshi* 124.3050. It is interesting, and unlikely, that the Uyghur Eren, let alone Chinggis Qan, would have been urging the teaching of this strikingly Confucian doctrine. Nor would Temüge Odchigin or any other Mongol prince have had a compelling reason to adopt Confucianism, especially when north China was still not firmly under Mongol control. While we cannot discount this account out of hand, as I comment in more detail below, this story is more likely the result of reading back into the record by Eren’s descendants some two generations later.

⁴⁰ As the youngest son of Yesügei and Hö’elün, Temüge Odchigin inherited his family’s domain, the so-called “yurt,” located in northeastern Mongolia just southeast of Lake Hulun. See Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 322–23. His appanage in northeast China was a later acquisition.

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remained in the area after the Mongol conquest.⁴¹ After Chinggis Qan's death, Ögödei Qan sent him on a military campaign in Henan, where he was first given the very powerful position of Grand Judge (*da duanshiguan*), and later made Agent over civil and military affairs there (*junmindu darughachi*). As further confirmation of his status and power, he was allowed to wear the Golden Tiger Tablet and was given four women from the qan's own harem. He had a long career in north China and after he died was eventually awarded several honorific posthumous titles by the Yuan court.

Eren's younger cousin, Sergius 撒吉思 (fl. 1260s), also possessed the kinds of linguistic and leadership skills sought after by the Mongols. He was appointed to be a tutor to the Qara Khitai *gürkhan*, and after the Uyghurs submitted to the Mongols he was sent to serve Temüge Odchigin at his appanage in Yidu as a secretary (*bishechi*) and chief tutor to the prince (*lingwangfu*).⁴² The role as secretary and chief tutor put Sergius in close contact with the upper echelons of the Mongol imperial clan, a position that he used to his ultimate advantage when he was a trusted advisor to Temüge Odchigin's grandson, Tachar 塔察兒 (fl. 1260s), in a succession dispute after Temüge Odchigin's death. Sergius succeeded in having him

⁴¹ See Toghto 脫脫, ed., *Jinshi* 金史 [History of the Jin Dynasty] (1344; rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975) 122.2661, for information on this Jurchen clan.

⁴² *Yuanshi* 134.3243. Sergius must have been a very young man when he served the Qara Khitai *gürkhan*, since the bulk of his career occurred in the 1250s–1260s. See *Yuanshi* 144.3431, the biography of his son, Dharma 答里麻, for information on his service at the Qara Khitai court. The only other Yuan-era source that documents Sergius's branch of this family is a preface to a family genealogy: see Cheng Jufu, *Xuelou ji* 15.17b–18a, as translated by Ch'en Yuan, *Western and Central Asians in China Under the Mongols: their Transformation into Chinese*, tr. Ch'ien Hsing-hai and L. Carrington Goodrich (Los Angeles: University of California, 1966), 238–39.

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recognized by the other Mongol princes as Temüge Odchigin's legitimate successor, and as a result Sergius was put in charge of the territory south of Heishan 黑山 in northeast China.

Sergius's connection to the Mongol royal clan continued to be a source of power for him after Qubilai became grand qan; Sergius was promoted to pacification, or control officer (*xuanfu*) of Beijing prefecture, located just northeast of the Yuan capital Dadu, and was given a member of the imperial Onggirat clan (*Wengjila shi*) in marriage and gifts of a gold hat and embroidered cloth. These gifts indicate the high status in which he was held by the Mongols.

But Sergius was also more than a tutor and political advisor. He led military personnel to suppress the rebellion of Li Tan 李壇 (fl. 1231–62), a local strongman in Yidu, Shandong.⁴³ This rebellion was one of Qubilai Qan's first real tests as a legitimate emperor of China, since Li Tan had the material resources necessary to mount a serious rebellion and was the son-in-law of a Chinese man, Wang Wentong 王文統 (fl. 1261–62), whom Qubilai Qan had appointed as privy councillor, or manager, in the Central Secretariat (*pingzhang zhengshi zhongshusheng*). This would be the last time that Qubilai Qan would rely exclusively on Chinese personnel in the highest ranks of his government. Sergius was amply rewarded by Qubilai Qan for his efforts; he was given all of Li Tan's personal landholdings at Yidu, consisting of some five thousand *mou*, and elevated in rank to chief military commissioner of

⁴³ On Li Tan, see his official biography in the section on rebellious officials, *Yuanshi* 206.4591–94; Sun Kekuan 孫克寬, “Yuanchu Li Tan shibian de fenxi” 元初李壇事變的分析 [Analysis of the Li Tan rebellion in the early Yuan], *Dalu zazhi* 大陸雜誌 13.8 (1956): 7–15; and Hok-lam Chan, “Li T'an (?–1262),” in *In the Service of the Khan*, 500–19.

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Mongolian troops (*da dudu*) in Shandong Province (*Shandong xingsheng* 山東行省) and agent (*darughachi*) overseeing his home area of Yidu Prefecture (*Yidulu* 益都路).⁴⁴

Both Eren Temür and Sergius settled in Yidu, where they raised families that continued the trends of officeholding based on military and linguistic skill. Eren Temür's descendants eventually became known by the Chinese-style surname Xie 偃, and are the subjects of later chapters of this book. Sergius's descendants also established successful records of service and, like their cousins, adopted a Chinese-style surname, Li 里. Unfortunately, we know far less about Sergius's branch of this prominent family than about the Xie family. We do know that his descendants were well versed in the Chinese cultural tradition, and in medical arts. For example, the family surname was chosen in part because it appears in the Confucian classic text *Chunqiu* 春秋 [Spring and Autumn Annals].⁴⁵ One of Sergius's grandsons, Dharma, whose biography also appears in the *Yuanshi*, had appointments in the Imperial Medical Academy, the Hanlin Academy, the Muslim Medical Bureau, and in the Censorate.

Conclusion

When we examine the histories of individuals identified with the Uyghur *idikut* at the time of submission to the Mongols, a pattern of engagement with the new political order begins to emerge. All of these men were members of

⁴⁴ Sergius's positions in Shandong are summarized in Wu Tingxie 吳廷燮, *Yuan xingsheng chengxiang pingzhang zhengshi nianbiao* 元行省丞相平章政事年表 [Chronological table of chief councilors and chief administrators of branch provinces in the Yuan Dynasty], in *Ershiwu shi bubian*, 14 vols. (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2005), Vol. 13, 525.

⁴⁵ See Ch'en Yuan, *Western and Central Asians in China*, 239.

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the Uyghuristan aristocracy, and most participated in the *idiqu*'s decision to transfer his allegiance from the Qara Khitai to the Mongols. This event was of signal importance to the status of the Uyghurs in the eyes of the Mongols, and had a major impact on their treatment by their new masters. The salient feature for each of those Uyghurs was their association with the Uyghur *idiqu*, who alone had the political legitimacy to make that transfer. On the basis of that relationship, each gained a position of advantage, which they used to further their own ends. Some remained in their native land as representatives of the Mongols, while others were dispersed from Uyghuristan to fill important positions in the new Mongol political order abroad.

The careers of these first generation diaspora elites also reveal the largely undifferentiated nature of the early Mongol administrative apparatus. All of the Uyghurs we have discussed participated in both civil and military matters, and their official titles or offices as service personnel were typically broad and all-inclusive, akin to the titles and duties that would be found in any nomadic qan's retinue. They accompanied the Mongols in battle, probably leading Uyghur troops, but also acted as civil administrators and advisors. Back home, these men were put in positions such as judge (*duanshiguan*), secretary (*bishechi*), or agent/overseer (*darughachi*), which also had wide-ranging authority over all kinds of affairs and groups of people. Any real distinction between civil and military spheres of authority was slow in coming, beginning only under Möngke and Qubilai. We shall see evidence of this evolution in the Mongol administrative system when we examine the careers of descendants of some of these Uyghurs in the following chapters.

These Uyghurs also brought some specific resources into the Mongol empire, not least of which was the writing system that they introduced to Chinggis Qan. In fact, while appreciated for their experience in

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administration and their military resources, the literacy and cultural training of these men seem to have been most highly valued by the Mongols. As we have seen, several of these Uyghur men ended up as tutors and personal advisors to members of the Mongol imperial clan. Their status as technicians of literacy put them in very good positions at the heart of Mongol power, and they were savvy enough to use those positions for their own ends. The success of that strategy is clearly evident when we look at their descendants. In every case, the families of those first Uyghur diaspora elites successfully maintained high status within the Mongol realm. Some of those families used accrued social and cultural capital eventually to construct identities as members of the Chinese literati quite separate from their Mongol overlords.