

Chinqai (ca. 1169-1252): Architect of Mongolian Empire¹

Paul D. Buell

The ability of nomadic peoples to conquer vast territories was never in doubt in ancient and medieval times--more uncertain, however, was their ability to rule their conquests and establish enduring states. The Mongols were particularly successful in this regard and they achieved their success, like other nomadic empire-founders before them, largely through forging alliances with sedentary cultures, particularly those geographically positioned adjacent to the steppe and having long experience with steppe-sedentary interactions. From these cultures emerged the urgently required cultural, social, and political intermediaries who made nomadic rule possible in fact, as well as in theory.

One such intermediary was the Mongol minister Chinqai, who defected to the Mongols at an early date and later served three of the four Mongol qans of the era of unified empire, during much of the time as *de facto* prime minister, before perishing in the great purges of Möngke's reign.

Although there is disagreement in our sources about his precise ethnic affiliation, Chinqai, who was a Nestorian Christian, was probably an Önggüt or from some other, closely related Turkic-speaking community of the Sino-Mongolian frontier zone.² In addition to his native

¹ The account here is based in part on a fuller biography of Chinqai published in Igor de Rachewiltz, Chan Hok-lam, Hsiao Ch'i-ch'ing [蕭啓慶] and Peter W. Geier, editors, *In the Service of the Khan, Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yuan Period (1200-1300)* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1993), 95-111. I would like to thank Igor de Rachewiltz and Hsiao Ch'i-ch'ing for their willingness to discuss Chinqai and his biography with me in some detail. Needless to say, the aforementioned are in no way responsible for any errors in the present paper.

² Chinqai is called Kereyid (Ch'ieh-lieh [怯烈]) by some of his Chinese biographers (e.g., *KTHK*, 10, 5a; *YS*, 2963), a Hui-hui, "Muslim," also: man from Turkistan or from a culture associated with Turkistan, less commonly: Uighur, in the *HTSL* (467), and an Uighur in the *MTPL* (449), if the T'ien "the merchant" mentioned is indeed Chinqai, as I think he is. Juvaini also strongly suggests that Chinqai was an Uighur (*HWC*, II, 492) and Rashid ad-Din says it outright (*SGC*, 155). This apparently contradictory evidence can best be reconciled if we assume

Turkic dialect,³ Chinqai also seems to have spoken and been able to read Chinese⁴ and was Sinicized enough to employ a Chinese surname, T'ien [田]. If he is the T'ien, the "Uighur" (a term applied generally to Turkic-speakers living along the Chinese frontiers) mentioned in the *Meng-ta pei-lu* of 1221, then Chinqai's early career was as merchant and as spy:

There was once an Uighur called T'ien. He was extremely rich and had made a considerable fortune as a merchant. He travelled back and forth between [the Mongols], Shan-tung, and Ho-Pei. He told [the Mongols] everything about the people there. Along with the Jüyin people he persuaded the Mongol ruler to raise forces and invade.

No date is given for these activities, but the passage occurs in the text of the *Meng-ta pei-lu* immediately after an account of the great 1207 uprising of the Jüyin peoples of Inner Mongolia and probably refers to that time. The Jüyin peoples were Chin tribal auxiliaries and included forces drawn from the Önggüt and other Turkic-speaking groups, charged with guarding the frontier against the Mongols and other potential aggressors from the deep steppe. By the early 13th century their interests were increasingly associated with this deep

the Kereyid referred to by Hsü Yu-jen were not the Mongol clan but the Önggüd Kereyid, a group to which Alaquus-tigin-quri and his family belonged, according to the 14th century Ere'öl Inscription. These Önggüd were largely Nestorian Christian in religion, like Chinqai himself (*HWC*, I, 259), and were often referred to as Uighur, a term which, as Paul Pelliot has pointed out, could be used in reference to almost any Turkic-speaker from the Sino-Mongolian frontier zone or Turkestan during the 13th and 14th centuries (see Paul Pelliot, *Recherches sur les Chrétiens d'Asie Centrale et d'Extrême-Orient*, Oeuvres Posthumes de Paul Pelliot (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1973), 242ff. Also strongly suggestive that Chinqai was an Önggüd, or a member of some other highly Sinified group of the Chinese frontier, is his familiarity with Chinese culture, his Chinese being good enough to read documents produced in Chinese by Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai (see below) and his use of a Chinese-style surname.

³ That Chinqai spoke a Turkic-language is clearly implied by his identification as an Uighur in some sources.

⁴ According to Hsü T'ing (*HTSL*, 482) Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai's acts written in Chinese had no validity unless countersigned with an order in the Uighur script by Chinqai. This implies that Chinqai was able to review the documents in question and thus was able to read Chinese. Chinqai's ability to communicate freely with Ch'ang Ch'un and others of his party also suggests that the former had considerable ability in Chinese.

steppe and not with the moribund sedentary Chin empire, which was increasingly drawn in upon itself. Starting with a few individuals and a few isolated groups, the trickle of those going over to the Mongols soon became a flood, and in the end the entire Inner-Mongolian frontier zone was lost by the Chin, opening Manchuria and North China to invasion.⁵

Chinqai may himself have been among the first to go over to the Mongols. Quite possibly, like the Hasan mentioned in the *Secret History*,⁶ and later by Muhammed Yalavanchi,⁷ Chinqai began his association with the Mongols by carrying on an illicit trade with them. He was soon engaged in their wars, since Mongol tradition makes Chinqai one of those among the stalwarts "drinking the waters of Baljuna" in 1203.⁸ By 1206 he commanded his own "hundred"⁹ and participated in the great reorganizations which accompanied the formal election of the Mongol chieftain Temüjin (subsequently known as Chinggis-qan) as supreme ruler of a new Mongolian world order.

At that time Mongolian administration was primitive and underdeveloped. Two structures were present, both joined through the person of the Mongol emperor. One structure was based upon the imperial clan, co-owner and co-ruler by Mongolian tradition of all those conquests made by its foremost representative, the Mongol *qan* (or in his name). This structure functioned through the *jhargha*, a joint inquiry by representatives of interested parties, members of the imperial clan by blood or by marriage, into booty (including conquered populations, later revenues) and the distribution of booty. Also

⁵ On the Jüyin peoples, the 1207 revolt, and events leading up to it, see Paul D. Buell, "The Role of the Sino-Mongolian Frontier Zone in the Rise of Chinggis-qan," in Henry G. Schwarz, editor, *Studies on Mongolia, Proceedings of the First North American Conference on Mongolian Studies* (Bellingham, Washington, 1979), 63-76.

⁶ *SH*, 182. In the text, referring to 1203, Hasan (Asan) comes to Chinggis-qan as an envoy from the Önggüt prince Alaquš-digit-quri, bringing with him sable and squirrel skins which he had traded upstream on the Ergüne River in exchange for a thousand wethers.

⁷ On the early career of Muhammad Yalavanchi, see Hsiao Ch'i-ch'ing, *Hsi-yü-jen yü yüan-ch'u cheng-chih* [西域人與元初政治], Kuo-li t'ai-wan ta-hsüeh wen-shih ts'ung-kan (Taipei, 1966), 10ff.

⁸ *KTHK*, 10, 5b. Hsü mistakenly assigns the semi-legendary events associated with the Baljuna covenant to 1206.

⁹ *KTHK*, *loc. cit.*

functioning was a proto-imperial administration centered on the bodyguard establishment of the *qan*.¹⁰

Chinqai was probably already a member of the *qan*'s bodyguard at this date and it was through the *qan*'s bodyguard and household that he began to participate in the administration of the Mongolian Empire. According to what became the established practice of the time for many high officials (one continued under the Yüan),¹¹ Chinqai held two offices: one within the bodyguard and household establishment of the *qan*, the other an "external" appointment, within a larger imperial governmental context. Thus in 1212 (before that time Chinqai may have

¹⁰ For details on this structure and its development see, as an introduction, Paul D. Buell, "Kalmyk Tanggaci People: Thoughts on the Mechanics and Impact of Mongol Expansion," *Mongolian Studies*, VI (1980), 41-59, and Paul D. Buell, "Tribe, *Qan* and *Ulus* in Early Mongol China: Some Prolegomena to Yüan History," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Washington, 1977.

¹¹ This traditional practice of conjoint office holding (with one office--often quite high--in the government at large, another--often quite lowly--in the Keshigten or Bodyguard) by many members of the imperial bodyguard is referred to in the YS (99, 2524) in the following terms:

All the descendants of senior members of the Keshigten, whether it is because of the favor of the Emperor, or the recommendation of a prime minister, or because of precedence, inherit office so that they may control the imperial guard. Although their offices were low and of no importance, when they were old and had served long, they would be appointed to offices of the highest rank. Moreover, in the case of the senior officials of the Four Keshigten, the emperor would sometimes order the highest officials to fill these offices. However, this was not a regular method of appointment. The others holding Keshigten offices and residing in the palace divided up the business of clothing, bows and arrows, food and drink, record keeping, carts and horses, tents, storehouses and arsenals, medicine and divination, and all performed these functions on an hereditary basis. Although [members of the Keshigten] would receive appointments [outside the Keshigten] on account of talent and ability, and would be employed to fulfill offices, and although their rank and power were very great, they would one day return to the palace and take charge of their business as before. There were no changes through the generations. No one who was not extremely close to the emperor and extremely trusted could participate in Keshigten business.

held a less important bodyguard office) Chinqai was made a *cherbi* or chamberlain, assigned a staff of ten officers with golden tallies (emblems of office) and fifty officers with silver tallies. He was awarded a pearl flag, a golden tiger talley for himself, and a silver seal.¹² More or less simultaneously, Chinqai also became an imperial *jharghuchi*, "arbitrator."¹³ In this capacity, Chinqai was quite likely among those members of the bodyguard called upon by the *qan* to hear *jhargha* ("litigations"), along with the *qan's* senior *jharghuchi*, Shigi Quduqu.¹⁴ He also seems to have participated in the business of registering and appointing members of subject populations (in one case, *circa* 1225, or somewhat earlier, under the control of Belgüdei, Chinggis-qan's younger brother and chief *jharghuchi* for the imperial clan as a whole), a role which brought him increasingly into contact with Mongol China and other sedentary domains of the Mongols.¹⁵ Also apparently as *jharghuchi*, Chinqai was at an indeterminate time, given control over various representatives (gold talley officers) of imperial relatives (by marriage).¹⁶ These representatives were quite likely persons empowered to see to the interests of such individuals and at the same time to serve in the imperial administration, a practice well documented later.¹⁷ They must have added considerably to what was already, by the standards of the time, a large staff.

By the end of Chinggis-qan's reign, Chinqai was receiving assignments of increasing complexity and responsibility. Some time before 1221 (but probably not as early as 1212, the date implied by the *Yüan shih*),¹⁸ Chinqai was ordered to establish a colony (Chinqai Bala-yasun, the "grainary of Chinqai") of artisans and other Mongol captives, largely Chinese (part of the *qan's* share of the subject popula-

¹² *KTHK*, 10, 5b; *YS*, 120, 2964.

¹³ *KTHK*, *loc. cit.*

¹⁴ *SH*, 234.

¹⁵ *YS*, 153, 3612. The text refers to Chinqai by his title, *Cherbi*. On Belgüdei as *jharghuchi* for the imperial clan as a whole, see the *YS*, 117, 2905.

¹⁶ *KTHK*, 10, 6a. The text records Chinqai's reappointment to this position by Ögödei, implying that he already held such an office under Chinggis.

¹⁷ The history of this practice is documented in Buell, 1977 (86ff and *passim*). For a discussion of how princely representatives fitted into a larger scheme of imperial administration, see also Paul D. Buell, "Kalmyk Tenggaci People: Thoughts on the Mechanics and Impact of Mongol Expansion," *Mongolian Studies*, VI (1980), 41-59.

¹⁸ *YS*, 120, 2964.

tion), in Western Mongolia.¹⁹ Not long after, he took charge of the journey of the Taoist master Ch'ang-ch'un [長春] across Mongolia and Turkestan to meet Chinggis-qan in Afghanistan (1221-1224)²⁰ and later helped record the Taoist's words for posterity at the behest of the *qan*.²¹ The special position occupied by Chinqai at court is clear from the account (as is the great esteem that he was held in by Chinggis-qan).

Chinqai's role had grown with the expansion of the Mongol empire itself. At first, Mongol efforts had been directed by and large at subduing steppe enemies, but collisions with the sedentary world, intended or unintended, were almost inevitable and were followed by systematic raiding and, ultimately, conquest.²²

As early as 1207, the Nestorian Önggüt, probably Chinqai's own people, surrendered to the Mongols.²³ Shortly thereafter, the first Chinese territories were acquired and in 1215 Chung-tu [中都], the capital of the Chin Empire, was conquered. Chinqai seems not only to have helped in planning these advances, but to have actively participated in them in many cases, as dutifully recorded in his biography. In 1215, in recognition of his merits in bringing about the fall of Chung-tu, Chinqai was allowed to shoot arrows in four directions to claim a considerable share of the booty.²⁴ He received other favors as well.²⁵

With these new conquests came new administrative problems, and the Mongol response was to extend the already existing imperial structure into the newly conquered domains. Initially, this process was somewhat haphazard, resulting in conflicting networks of military, imperial and clan authority. China, for example, was simultaneously organized as a pseudo-tribal structure based upon the Mongol garrison force, or *tanma*, while at the same time it was subject to the local control of *darughachi*, "agents" or "legates" installed by various authorities

¹⁹ *KTHK*, 10, 6s.

²⁰ *HYC*, 1, 284ff.

²¹ *HYC*, 1, 342.

²² See the description of this process as it occurred in the west in Paul D. Buell, "Early Mongol Expansion in Western Siberia and Turkestan (1207-1219): A Reconstruction," *Central Asiatic Journal*, XXXVI, 1-2 (1992), 1-32.

²³ See Buell, 1979.

²⁴ *KTHK*, 10, *loc. cit.*

²⁵ Among them was a fine horse, a princely gift for the Mongols. See the *YS*, 120, *loc. cit.*

(including the *qan* himself) to oversee various interests, with further complications due to the activities of visiting and locally appointed *jharghuchi*. These included in one case, as we have seen above, Chinqai himself.²⁶

Although conflict between authorities representing different interests--particularly those of the princes versus those of the *qan*--persisted until the end of Mongol Empire, administration of the conquered sedentary areas was gradually centralized and systematized. This was thanks largely to the efforts of Chinqai and others like him, men who were well aware that the predatory practices of the Mongols would quickly destroy the long-term revenue-producing potential of the conquered domains. By the last years of Chinggis-qan's reign, this process was already well underway in Mongol China. No later than 1225, Chung-tu had become the focus of a major regional authority with administrative, tax-collecting, and (to a limited extent) military powers. Initially, the most important personages in this developing administration were *darughachi*: Shih-mo Ming-an [石抹明安], a Khitan belonging to the Jüyin units which had played so important a role in capturing Chung-tu,²⁷ and his son Hsien-te-pu [咸得不],²⁸ for the city, and the Muslim Ja'far hoja for the "province" surrounding the city.²⁹ Later, a tax office headed by Liu Min [劉敏]³⁰ was added and what appears to have been a regional *jharghuchi* administration headed by Wang Chi [王楫], reappointed to his post in 1228 (after holding it for an indeterminate number of years) by no less a personage than Chinqai ("Cherbi") himself in connection with Chinqai and Belgüdei's *jhargha* to register Chinese population for redistribution to the princes.³¹ A similar administration had already emerged in Beshbaliq, under Muhammed Yalavanchi and later under his highly capable son, Mas'ud beg.³²

²⁶ As an introduction, see the discussion in Buell, 1980.

²⁷ Buell, 1977: 88; *YS*, 150, 3555-6

²⁸ *YS*, 150, 3557. See also the discussion in Ts. Munkiyev, *Kitaiskii istochnik o pervykh Mongol'skikh khanakh* (Moskva, 1965), 103.

²⁹ *YS*, 120, 2991.

³⁰ *YS*, 153, 3609.

³¹ *YS*, 153, 3612.

³² The establishment of this administration, *circa* 1223 or 1224, is described in the *Secret History* (chapter 263) in the following terms:

Foundations for centralized and rational administration in the conquered sedentary domains laid down during the latter part of Chinggis-qan's reign were considerably strengthened under the second Mongol *qan*, Ögödei (r. 1229-1241). Ögödei reappointed Chinqai to office³³ and at the same time began a general reorganization in all portions of Mongol domains, in part to ensure that adequate revenues were available to support an expanded administrative structure. In Mongol China this reorganization took two forms. As much as possible, taxation was standardized and at the same time every effort was made to prevent the direct interference of princely representatives in the day-to-day administration of those parts of China claimed by the *qan* as imperial domains. Second, efforts begun under Chinggis-qan to register and re-register the citizens of the conquered domains in the form of an elaborate Mongol census continued. Charged with the latter function was Shigi Quduqu, continuing efforts begun as early as 1215 when he, Arqaiqasar, and the food manager Önggür, both members of

And he [Chinggis-qan] took away the Sarta'ul [Muslim] people completely. When Chinggis-qahan issued a *jarliq* he installed *daruqaci* in the various cities. From Ürünggeci [Urgench] city Sarta'ul came of the Qurumsi Clan, father and son, the two of them, named Yalawaci and Masqut. They told the way of administering cities to Chinggis-quaan. It was agreed to administer in this manner. The son, Masqut Qurumsi, he installed without *daruqa* for governing cities such as Buqar [Bukhara], Semisgen [Samarqand], Ürünggeci, Udan [Khotan], Kisqar [Kashgar], Uriyang [Yarkand] and Güsen-daril. The father, Yalawaci, he took away. He took him for governing the Jungdu City of the Khitan. Because of the capability in city administration of the two, Yalawachi and Masqut, from among the Saraqtai, he installed them without the *daruqaci* for governing the Khitan.

From Juvaini (*HWC*, I, 97) we know that it was not just Masqut who was appointed to govern Turkestan, but his father as well. The *Secret History* passage in fact lumps two entirely different events together, the 1224 or 1225 appointment of Yalavanchi and Mas'ud jointly to govern Turkestan and Ögödei's 1229 appointment of Yalavanchi to take charge of the Chung-tu administration (see below in the text). Note that the establishment of a formal administration (*darughaci*) for Turkestan is also noted in the *SWCCL* (198), but without specific reference to Yalavanchi or Mas'ud.

³³ *KTHK*, 10, 6a.

the imperial bodyguard, were sent to conquered Chung-tu to take possession of the Chin treasury and catalogue its contents.³⁴

Tax reform in Mongol China is inseparably associated with the Khitan Confucian Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai [耶律楚材] (1189-1243). Yeh-lü, according to his biographer, not only helped reorganize the tax administration in Mongol China, but also thwarted the efforts of some Mongols to convert north China into, from their perspective, more useful pasture lands:

After T'ai-tsu [i.e. Chinggis-qan] went campaigning in the west the treasuries and storehouses were without a *tou* of grain and a *ts'un* of silk and the officials in the central government, Pieh-ta [別達],³⁵ and others, said to one another that although they had got the Chinese people there was still no use for them. It would be better to completely eliminate them and cause plants and trees to become luxuriant to make pasture lands. The late gentleman [Ch'u-ts'ai] forthwith came forward and said: "With the vastness of the world and the richness of the empire how can something be sought and not found. It has not been done; why call it of no use." He therefore made a memorial on the benefits of land and commercial taxes on wine, vinegar, salt, iron, mountains and marshes. Years in succession there could be obtained 500,000 *liang* of silver, 80,000 rolls of thin silk, and 400,000 *tan* of grain. The emperor said "If it is really like my minister says then there would be a surplus for national consumption! The minister may undertake it experimentally." Ch'u-ts'ai then memorialized that tax offices for the 10 *lu*³⁶ be set up and that two officials, a minister and a vice-minister, be installed [in each]. These offices were all to be filled with Confucians . . . The use of literary officials by Our Dynasty thus started from the late gentleman's initiation. Before this the senior officials of the various *lu* had jointly directed the army and the people, money and grain. Time and again they had relied on their power and

³⁴ *SWCCL*, 174-6; *SH*, chapter 252. On the various Mongol censuses in China, see Otagi Matsuo [愛宕松男], *Mokojin seikenji shita no kanchi ni okereu hanseiki no mondai* [蒙古人政權治下の漢地に於な版籍の問題], *Asiatic Studies in Honor of Toru Haneda*, 1960, 383-429.

³⁵ This Pieh-ta is otherwise unknown. Quite likely the transcription is defective and we should read [Su]-pieh-ta, i.e., Sübe'edei, a man known for his conservative views and highly influential at court due to long service in the Chin Mongol armies, including in the final campaigns against the Chin.

³⁶ Note that in spite of the use of the same Chinese terminology, these *lu* had little in common with their Chin or Northern Sung predecessors and were in fact Mongolian administrative units, i.e., *cölge*, the administrative territory assigned an imperial *darughachi*. See the detailed discussion in Buell 1977: 94ff.

dissolutely committed injustice. The later gentleman memorialized that senior officials were to exclusively regulate civil affairs, that the myriarchy officers were to take charge of military administration, and that tax officers were to take charge of money and grain. They were not to interfere in each others' business. Consequently this became a set order. It was disapproved by the great and powerful.³⁷

That was in 1229 or 1230. By 1231, the Khitan minister was able to present the tangible results of his efforts to Ögödei:

The emperor reached the various *lu* of Yün-chung [雲中].³⁸ Registers and records of tax amounts of silver, silk, and grain in storehouses that had been advanced were set forth completely before the emperor. Everything accorded with the amounts set forth before the emperor originally. The emperor laughed and said: "My minister has not left my person. How could he cause money and grain to flow in like this? I do not think that the southern dynasty [of Chin] has a minister like you, is this not so?" The late gentleman replied that those more worthy than himself were very many. "Because your servant had no talent he was left behind in Yen [Chung-tu] [燕, 中都]."³⁹ The emperor personally poured out a large goblet to confer on him. He then, that day, endowed him with the seal of the chung-shu [中書] minister [i.e. that of the prime minister]. He had him regulate the business of that office. All the business was turned over to him.⁴⁰

The *Yüan shih* provides additional detail including a complete list of all those appointed, by *lu*.⁴¹ The *Secret History* also appears to mention the appointment of the twenty officials but calls them *balaqaci*, "storehouse managers," and *amuci*, "granary managers," titles indicative of the Mongolian point of view.⁴²

³⁷ YWL, 57, 12-13.

³⁸ That is, Yün-chung and the other nine *lu*. The Yün-chung area of Inner Mongolia was then the headquarters of the Mongolian tribal garrison for Mongol China commanded by Muqali and his successors. See Buell, 1980.

³⁹ The Mongols originally acquired the services of Ch'u-ts'ai after he was left behind in Chung-tu by the fleeing Chin emperor as part of a rump regime continuing to function in the former capital. On Ch'u-ts'ai's early years, see Munkeyev, 1965: 11-14.

⁴⁰ YWL, *loc cit.*

⁴¹ YS, 2, 30.

⁴² SH, 279.

Contrary to the information contained in Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai's biography (which seeks to cast the Khitan in the role of Confucian "sage minister" to the Mongol "ruler on horseback," and considerably overstates his actual role), it was Chinqai who had overall charge of the Mongol administration in China and in other sedentary domains controlled by them. Chinqai, for example, and not Ch'u-ts'ai, was keeper of the *qan's* seal, which had to be applied to all official documents.⁴³ Even those issued by Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai had to first be validated by Chinqai before they could be issued.⁴⁴

Reforms similar to those introduced in China were carried out in Turkestan by Mahmud Yalavanchi⁴⁵ and in Iran and Khoransan by Körgüz (an Uighur or, possibly, an Önggüt). These efforts were successful but gave rise to tremendous opposition among the princes and others who were disadvantaged by the new system. In Tus and Khorasan, site of another burgeoning Mongol regional administration, a protracted struggle broke out between representatives of the princes and representatives of the center over who was to control the administration. Initially, the area, then only partially under Mongol control, was ruled by the Qara-khitan, or possibly Önggüt, Chin Temür, an imperial representative or *darughachi* (turkic *basqaq*), with strong participation by the representatives of the powerful prince Batu and others.⁴⁶ Upon Chin Temür's death (ca. 1235/36) an acute struggle

⁴³ HTSL, 484:

Their seal is called the "jewel of sending forth orders." The inscription is folded seal style and is more than three *ts'un* square. Cinqai holds charge of it. There is no seal of the signature to provide a protection. Great and small affairs must all be decided by the false ruler [Ögödei] himself. Ch'u-ts'ai [Nien-ho] Chung-shan [粘合重山], and Chinqai together hold the Tatar authority. The business of the four directions, if there is no order of the Tatar ruler, and even authority over life and death, of granting and taking, is placed in the hands of the person controlling the seal.

⁴⁴ HTSL, 483.

⁴⁵ HWC, I, 97. By context, Juvaini dates the beginning of these reforms to the time of Chinggis-qan. See also HWC, II, 517. Note: in this connection, the SWCCL (202-3) treats Yalavanchi's appointment in Turkestan in exactly the same terms as Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai's in China.

⁴⁶ HWC, II, 482ff.

broke out between representatives of the center and of the princes over who was to be appointed Chin Temür's successor.⁴⁷

The winner was the Uighur (or Önggüt) Körgüz, a former deputy of Chin Temür. He was finally awarded the latter's office and went on to carry out administrative and fiscal reforms after a *jhargha* presided over by Chinqai himself (one of the "chiefs of the yarghu").⁴⁸ Chinqai came out solidly in favor of organized administration in place of anarchy.⁴⁹ Chinqai was involved in similar disputes regarding Mongol China. Here the issue was not so much deciding for or against an organized tax system as it was opting for a more productive system. Although events are not entirely clear, Chinqai seems to have been among those favoring using tax farmers to maximize revenues in the conquered domains, contrary to the advice of Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai, who favored lighter, but more systematic taxation. This was to permit recovery by the conquered areas, still the center of active military campaigns as late as 1234-5. Tax farming won out in the person of the Khwarezmian tax-farmer 'Abd ar-Rahman⁵⁰ since the court seems to have become desperate for revenue as the Mongol campaign into Russia developed and as the imperial administration itself grew. Chinqai may have been a less than willing supporter of tax farming but was forced by circumstances to favor the scheme.⁵¹

The changing times which led to the rise of tax farming also resulted in other changes in the imperial administration as more conservative forces gained influence. Pressures intensified with the incapacitation and death of *qan* Ögödei in 1241 and the nearly five year regency of empress Töregene. Chinqai, along with Muhammed Yalavanchi, who had taken over control of the Mongol administration in China,⁵² leaving his son Mas'ud Beg behind in Turkestan, was soon forced to flee for his life and seek refuge with prince Ködön. Despite repeated

⁴⁷ *HWC*, II, 488ff.

⁴⁸ *HWC*, II, 497.

⁴⁹ *HWC*, II, 497ff.

⁵⁰ On the career of this man, see Hsiao, 1966: 40-43.

⁵¹ On the protracted power struggle, see *YWL*, 57, 19a-21b. See also the discussion in Munkeyev, 1965: 34-64. Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai's biography seeks to incriminate Chinqai by association, recording that it was the Uighur translator An-t'ien-ho, who went to Chinqai for patronage after failing to gain a desired post through Ch'u-ts'ai, who first recommended 'Abd ar-Rahman to Chinqai (*YWL*, 57, 19b-20a).

⁵² *SWCCL*, 219.

requests by his mother, the regent Töregene, Ködön refused to surrender the ministers who were thus able to weather the storm. Other progressives, Körgüz, for example, killed on the orders of the empress, were not so fortunate.⁵³

With the election of *qan* Güyük (r. 1246-47) in 1246, Chinqai resumed office once again,⁵⁴ this time as part of a coterie of largely Christian court officers serving a Christian *qan*.⁵⁵ Güyük seems to have done everything possible in his short reign to restore the administration established by his father. This included reestablishment of what had (by that time) become veritable provincial administrations for the conquered sedentary domains. By his time there were three, one for Mongol China, with headquarters in the former Chin capital of Chungtu, one for Turkestan, headquartered in Beshbaliq, and another for Khorasan/Iran (now formally organized as a "province" of the Mongol world order). Headquarters of the new administration was in Tus. A fourth "province" was comprised of the Mongol homeland, the *qol-un ulus*, "pivot ulus,"⁵⁶ "pivot patrimony," with its capital in Qaraqorum. Muhammed Yalavanchi was appointed to take control in China, his son Mas'ud-bed in Beshbaliq and Arghun aqa,⁵⁷ later as famous an administrator as any of the others, in tus.⁵⁸ Chinqai held control in the center where he not only supervised the administration of the other Mongol "provinces" but actively participated in the day-to-day running of the court as well. Such activities included the greeting of foreign ambassadors, now appearing at the court in growing numbers since the Mongol empire now extended from Russia to Korea, from Central

⁵³ *HWC*, II, 241-4.

⁵⁴ *YS*, 120, 2964.

⁵⁵ *HWC*, I, 259.

⁵⁶ On this term, see Buell 1977: 36f.

⁵⁷ Arghun-aqa, unlike Yalavanchi and his son, or for that matter Chinqai himself, was a full-blooded Mongol, an Oyrat, and began his career, apparently in the imperial bodyguard, as a *bicigchi* or "secretary." He was soon given more important missions including participation in a *jhargha* to investigate Körgüz during the lengthy dispute over Chin-temür's office. Later he was appointed *darughachi*, "imperial legate," as an associate (*nökör*) representing the interests of the *qan* in Körgüz's administration. Later, when Körgüz was impeached and imprisoned by the empress/regent Töregene, Arghun-aqa became Körgüz's replacement. He held this post until the end of the Mongolian empire. He later became a principal official in Il-khanate Iran. See *HWK*, II, 505ff.

⁵⁸ *HWC*, I, 257.

Siberia into Central China, Tibet, Turkestan, Iran/Khorasan and points beyond.

Among the foreign ambassadors greeted by Chingai was the papal envoy John di Plano Carpini, who has left behind an eyewitness account:

At that place [near Qaraqorum] we were summoned into the presence of the Emperor, and Chingay [Chingai] the protonotary wrote down our names and the names of those who had sent us, also the names of the chief of the Solangi [Koreans] and other others, and then calling out in a loud voice he recited them before the Emperor and all the chiefs. When this was finished each one of us genuflected four times on the left knee and they warned us not to touch the lower part of the threshold. After we had been most thoroughly searched for knives and they had found nothing at all, we entered by door on the east side. For no one dare enter from the west with the sole exception of the emperor or, if it is a chief's tent, the chief; those of lower rank do not pay much attention to such things. This was the first time since Cuyuc [Güyük] had been made Emperor that we had entered his tent in his presence. He also received all the envoys in that place, but very few entered his tent.⁵⁹

Later, John notes Chingai again, in connection with the drafting of a Mongol letter to the pope, to be carried back by the returning envoy:

The Emperor sent for, and through Chingay his protonotary told us to write down what we had to say and our business, and give it to him. We did this and wrote out for him all that we said earlier to Bati [Batu] . . . A few days passed by; then he had us summoned again and told us through Kadac [Qadaq], the procurator of the whole empire, in the presence of Bala and Chingay his protonotaries and many other scribes, to say all we had to say: we did this willingly and gladly. Our interpreter on this as on the previous occasion was Temer, a knight of Jerzlaus': and there were also present a cleric who was with him and another cleric who was with the Emperor. On this occasion we were asked if there were any people with the Lord Pope who understood the writing of the Russians or Saracens or even of the Tartars. We gave answer that we used neither Ruthenian nor Saracen writing: there were however Saracens in the country but they were a long way from the Lord Pope; but we said that it seemed to us that the most expedient course would be for them to write in Tartar and translate it for us, and we would write it down carefully [in] our own script and we would

⁵⁹ John di Plano Carpini, "History of the Mongols," 63-4.

take both the letter and the translation to the Lord Pope. Thereupon they left us to go to the Emperor. On St. Martin's day we were again summoned, and Kadac, Chingay and Bala, the aforementioned secretaries, came to us and translated the letter for us word by word. When we had written it in Latin, they had it translated so that they might hear a phrase at a time, for they wanted to know if we had made a mistake in any word. When both letters were written, they made us read it once and a second time in case we had left out anything, and they said to us: "See that you clearly understand everything, for it would be inconvenient if you did not understand everything, seeing you have to travel to such far-distant lands." When we replied "We understand everything clearly" they wrote the letter once again in Saracenic, in case anyone would be found in those parts who could read it if the Lord Pope so wished.⁶⁰

In his account, John, who was unaware of the Mongol office of Chinqai, but who noted Chinqai's role in processing imperial and other documents and (in recording events for later reference) translates his functions into terms familiar to his European, particularly, Italian readers, calling him a protonotary (*protonotarius*). In John's Italy and in much of the rest of medieval Europe, notaries formed a large guild charged with recording all legal, commercial and other business of which an official written record might be required. They were also active participants in government in general since often they alone possessed the specialized knowledge which made government work.⁶¹ A

⁶⁰ Dawson, *op.cit.*, 67.

⁶¹ Daniel Waley, *The Italian City-Republics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), describes the role of the Italian notaries of the era in the following terms (pp. 29-30):

Although in some cities the notaries were included in the same guild as the judges, their rank was normally a humbler one and they were rarely if ever of noble descent, though a successful notary might elevate his own family in the social scale. Their work was to record all transactions, commercial and others, of which a written record might be required, and this involved a considerable share in the paper work of the government. Almost all officials employed notaries as assistants, some of them a good many; the statutes of Modena required the third judge of the city to choose twenty *notaries de melioribus civitatis*, who were to enquire into the legality of the elections of the commune's officers . . . The political role in the commune of both judges and notaries was very considerable. Not only did they occupy a quite

protonotary was, in simplest terms, a chief of notaries, performing all the duties of a notary and a great deal more. One dictionary of Medieval Latin usage even translates *protonotarius* as "chancellor-in-chief."⁶² In Byzantium, for example, whose political institutions the Italian City states of Carpini's time still by and large followed, the *protonotarius* (*protonnotarios*) was a high-ranking officer who not only served as private secretary to high-ranking secular and ecclesiastical officials (possibly including the emperor himself) but could also be sent out to administer imperial or other estates as well as take charge of supply for the Byzantine army and navy, serving in some cases as a deputy to the governor of a naval theme.⁶³ Most Italian city states, including Milan, had their own *protonotarii* performing similar roles,⁶⁴ while Sienna had a similar officer, the "notary of the reformations." According to Bowsky:

He was essential to the council, indeed, to communal government. It was from his redactions, and what they included and omitted, that all laws and statutes acquired their definitive form. From his good copies the council's measures were recopied into the volumes of provisions and ordinances provided from the town's magistracies and into the communal constitutions. It was he who recorded the actions of other major councils, including the Council of the People. Despite their many burdens of office, the Nine [governing tyrants of Sienna]

disproportionate share of offices, they attended tirelessly at council meetings--thus, a meeting of 353 councillors at Modena in 1220 included twenty-three notaries and four judges, and one of 247 councillors at Arezzo some thirty years later eighteen notaries and ten judges--and they were there not merely to vote but to give council: the minutes record speech after speech by lawyers and notaries.

I am indebted to my colleague Tamsin Hekala for bringing the rich documentation on the *protonotarius* to my notice and for her willingness to discuss the use of Western medieval sources, such as the travelogue of John di Plano Carpini, in writing Mongol history.

⁶² J. F. Niermeyer, *Mediae latinitatis lexicon mohus* (London: E.J. Brill, 1976), 866. I am indebted to Tamsin Hekala for this reference.

⁶³ Alexander P. Kazhdan, editor in chief, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 3, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1746.

⁶⁴ Adriano Cappelli, *Dizionario di abbreviature Latine ed Italiane*, (Milan: Editore Ulrico Hoepli, 1987), 294.

selected and set the stipend for the notary of the reformations, one of the few officials not subject to a compulsory vacation from office.⁶⁵

Still another important official holding the rank of protonotarius in the West was the (participating) prothonotary apostolic, a high official, often jointly a bishop, responsible, among other things, for witnessing papal acts and participating in the ceremonies associated with the promulgation of these acts.⁶⁶

Thus, in equating Chinqai with the protonotaries of Italy, John was assigning the Mongol official, whose high and important office he clearly recognized, quite correctly from the perspective of his Italian and papal audience and quite correctly in terms of the precise functions of his Mongol office, that of imperial *jharghuchi*. Its functions, in addition to general administrative functions of a type familiar to the notaries and protonotaries of Italy (or Byzantium), also included the assembly of imperial acts into books, in effect their notarization by the *jharghuchi*, as the following edict of Chinggis-qan appointing Shigi Quduqu as *yeke jharghuchi*, or senior imperial *jharghuchi*, for the empire makes clear:

Chinggis-qahan issued a *jarliq* [edict] saying: "as I, assisted by Eternal Heaven, caused the empire to submit, you [Shigi Quduqu] became eyes for me to see and ears for me to hear. You apportion for me the empire [into apportionments] as personal subject population for Our Mother, Myself, the younger brothers and children, separating the people of the felt walls and breaking up the people of the board doors. No one must act contrary to your words!" Saying also: "Punishing the robbery and deciding the deceptions of the empire, cause those liable to capital punishment to be executed and cause those liable to payment of fines to pay fines!" He entrusted Shigi Quduqu with the *jarqu* of the empire. He also issued a *jarliq* saying: "When [he] has bound together his apportionings of the apportionments of the people of the empire and his settlement of *jharyu*, writing the book *Kökö Debter*, no one, down to our most distant descendants, must alter the Blue Book bound in white paper of Shigi Quduqu after it has been presented to me and sanctioned. Persons altering it must be liable to punishment."⁶⁷

⁶⁵ William M. Bowky, *A Medieval Italian Commune, Siena under the Nine, 1287-1355* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1981), 95.

⁶⁶ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, volume XI, 909-910.

⁶⁷ *SH*, chapter 203.

The good government which *qan* Güyük attempted to reestablish in his short reign did not long survive him. Although Chinqai retained his titles and offices under Ogul Qaimish (regent 148-51), he by and large remained outside the actual administration of affairs.⁶⁸ His power diminished further with the 1251 death of Prince Ködön, who had continued to be a major supporter of Chinqai.

With his accession of a new branch of the imperial line (descended from Tolui-noyan, youngest son of Chinggis-qan) in the person of *qan* Möngke (r. 1251-59), Chinqai's association with the now disgraced house of Ögödei was to prove fatal. Shortly after the election of the new *qan* a plot was uncovered supposedly headed by Shiremün, a grandson of Ögödei, and Naqu, Güyük's principal heir.⁶⁹ Real or trumped up, the plot provided an excuse for an extended purge of all real and perceived enemies of the new *qan*, including Chinqai, who was killed or executed in 1252 (at the age of 83), perhaps more to placate his enemies⁷⁰ than as a part of the purge *per se*.

Chinqai's family survived him and continued to be prominent in China, now the successor state of the Yüan, well into the 14th century. His most lasting memorial, however, was the persistence of the imperial system he helped create. Qan Möngke, although castigating Ögödei and his house, largely continued governmental practices initiated by Ögödei and his ministers, including Chinqai, and even, to some extent, tried to take credit for their organizational successes. Later, in China, Qubilai's qanate was organized on much the same basis as the old Mongol empire had been and for the first time in history ruled through real provinces, the old satellite administrations of Mongol empire in a new guise.⁷¹ The system survived in other parts of the formerly Mongol world as well, including in Muscovite Russia, which took over the system of the Golden Horde and which, in time, passed it on to imperial Russia and to the recently defunct Soviet Empire. This is not to say

⁶⁸ SGK, 186.

⁶⁹ As an introduction to this attempted coup and the machinations which led to Möngke's election, see Tomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1987), 21ff.

⁷⁰ According to Juvaini, Chinqai was "dealt with" by Danishmand Hajib, an old enemy (HWC, II, 587-8).

⁷¹ For an evaluation of Qubilai's early regime in terms of the imperial Mongol institutional legacy, see, as an introduction, Buell 1977: 170ff.

that Chinqai was exclusively responsible for the structure of Mongolian empire, but he, and others like him, persons with experience both in the steppe and in the sedentary world, did play a critical role in molding it. In Chinqai's case, he became so associated with the system he helped create that even Qan Möngke is said to have regretted his passing.⁷²

The abbreviated source references in the footnotes may be expanded as follows:

MONGOLIAN

- SH* Igor de Rachewiltz, editor, *Index to the Secret History of the Mongols*, Indiana University Publications (Uralic and Altaic Series, vol. 121), Bloomington, 1972.

PERSIAN

- HWC* 'Ala-ad-Din 'Ata-Malik Juvaini, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, translated by John Andrew Boyle, two volumes, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1958.
- SGK* Rashid al-Din Tabib, *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, translated by John Andrew Boyle, Columbia University Press, New York and London, 1971.

LATIN

- John di Plano Carpini, "History of the Mongols," translated by a Nun of Stanbrook Abbey, in C. Dawson, *The Mongol Mission*, Harper Torchbooks, 1966.

CHINESE

- HTSL* P'eng Ta-ya [彭大雅] and Hsü T'ing [徐霆], *Hei-ta shih-lüeh* [黑鞑事略], in Wang Kuo-wei [王國維], editor, *Meng-ku shih-liao ssu chung* [蒙古史料四種], Taipei, 1962.
- HYC* Li Chih-ch'ang [李志常], *Hsi-yu chi* [西遊記], in Wang Kuo-wei, *op cit.*
- KTHK* Hsü Yu-jen [許有壬], *Kuei-t'ang hsiao kao* [圭塘小膏], San-t'ang ts'ung-shu [三堂叢書].
- MTPL* Chao Hung [趙珙], *Meng-ta pei-lu* [蒙鞑備錄], in Wang Kuo-wei, *op. cit.*
- SWCCL* *Sheng-wu ch'in-cheng lu* [聖武親征錄], in Wang Kuo-wei, *op. cit.*
- YWL* *Yüan wen-lei* [元文類], edited by Su T'ien-chüeh [蘇天爵], *Shih-chieh shu-chü*, Taipei, 1962.
- YS* *Yüan Shih*, *Chung-hua shu-chü*, Pei-ching, 1976.

⁷² *KTHK*, 10, 7a.