



Pl. 10. The Khentel Range of northern Mongolia (aerial view)

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS

CHAPTER ONE

- 1 The origins of Činggis Qa'an.
At the beginning there was a blue-grey¹ wolf, born with his destiny *ordained* by Heaven Above. His wife was a fallow doe. They came crossing the Tenggis.² After they had settled at the source of the Onan River on *Mount Burqan Qaldun*, Batačiqan was born to them.
- 2 The son of Batačiqan was Tamača; the son of Tamača, Qoričar Mergen; the son of Qoričar Mergen, A'ujam Boro'ul; the son of A'ujam Boro'ul, Sali Qača'u; the son of Sali Qača'u, Yeke Nidün; the son of Yeke Nidün, Sem Soči; the son of Sem Soči, Qarču.
- 3 The son of Qarču, Borjigidai Mergen, had as wife Mongqoljin Qo'a. The son of Borjigidai Mergen, Toroqoljin Bayan, had a wife *named* Boroqčın Qo'a, a young lad³ *named* Boroldai Suyalbi, and two fine geldings, Dayir and Boro.⁴ Toroqoljin had two sons, Du'a Soqor and Dobun Mergen.
- 4 Du'a Soqor had a single eye in the middle of his forehead: with it he could see for a distance of three stages.⁵
- 5 One day Du'a Soqor went up Burqan Qaldun with his younger brother Dobun Mergen. Du'a Soqor looked out

¹ See the Commentary.

² Lit., 'the Sea' or (fig.) 'a large body of water' such as a great lake, possibly the Baikal.

³ I.e., a young manservant.

⁴ I.e., 'Dusky' and 'Grey.'

⁵ A 'stage' (*ne'üri*) is the distance between two nomadic camps.

from the top of Burqan Qaldun, and, as he did so,¹ he saw *in the distance* a band of people on the move who, following the course² of the Tünggelik Stream, were coming that way. He said, 'Among those people on the move who are coming this way, there is a fine girl in the front seat of a black covered cart.³ If she has not been given to *another* man, we shall ask her for you, my younger brother Dobun Mergen!' So saying, he sent his younger brother Dobun Mergen to have a look.

7 When Dobun Mergen reached those people, *he saw that* she was indeed a beautiful and charming girl, and of excellent reputation. Her name was Alan Qo'a and she had not yet been given to *any other* man.

8 As for that band of people, *the matter stood thus*. The daughter of Barqudai Mergen, lord of the Kōl Barqujīn Lowland, was a girl named Barqujīn Qo'a, and she had been given *in marriage* to Qorilartai Mergen, a chief of the Qori Tumat. At Ariq Usun,⁴ in the land of the Qori Tumat, that girl named Alan Qo'a was born to Barqujīn Qo'a, *wife* of Qorilartai Mergen.

9 As in their land the Qori Tumat had imposed bans on one another's sable, squirrel and wild game⁵ *hunting* grounds, and mutual relations were bad *as a result*, Qorilartai Mergen *separated from the Qori Tumat* and took the clan name Qorilar. Saying that the land of Burqan Qaldun was good, and that it was suitable for game hunting, he was *now* moving into *the territory* of the Uriangqai Burqan Bosqaqsan and Šinči Bayan, lords of Burqan Qaldun.⁶

¹ Lit., 'when he looked.'

² I.e., downstream.

³ I.e., a cart covered with black felt.

⁴ I.e., 'Clear Water (= River or Spring).'

⁵ I.e., mainly deer, antelopes and wild goats.

⁶ Translation uncertain. 'Burqan Bosqaqsan' may actually be a designation (lit., 'Who has erected the Burqan [? image]') of Šinči Bayan, and 'lords' (*ejet*) an honorific plural. See the Commentary.

This is how Dobun Mergen asked there and then for Alan Qo'a, daughter of Qorilartai Mergen of the Qori Tumat born at Ariq Usun, and how he took her as his wife.

10 After Alan Qo'a had come to Dobun Mergen, she bore him two sons who were named Būgūnūtei and Belgūnūtei.

11 Du'a Soqor, his elder brother, had four sons. Before long, the elder brother Du'a Soqor died. After Du'a Soqor's death his four sons no longer regarded their uncle Dobun Mergen as *a member* of the family but, looking down on him, they left him and moved away. They took the clan name Dörben and became the Dörben tribe.

12 After that, one day Dobun Mergen went out hunting on the Toqočağ Heights.¹ In the forest he met a man of the Uriangqai tribe who had killed a three-year-old deer and was roasting its ribs and entrails. Dobun Mergen said, 'Friend, share the quarry!'² 'I will give it to you,' said *the man*, and keeping for himself the main portion *of the animal* which has the lungs,³ and the skin, he gave all the meat of the three-year-old deer to Dobun Mergen.

14 Dobun Mergen went on, carrying the three-year-old deer on the back *of his horse*. On the way he met a poor man on foot who was leading his son *by the hand*. Dobun Mergen asked him, 'To which clan do you belong?' The man said, 'I am a man of the Ma'aliq Baya'ut, and I am in desperate straits. Give me some of the meat of that animal and I will give you this child of mine.' At these words
16 Dobun Mergen cut off one thigh of the three-year-old deer and gave it to him, and he took the child to be a servant in his house.

17 Before long, Dobun Mergen died. After his death, Alan Qo'a, although she had no husband, bore three sons who

¹ Or 'Hills.'

² Lit., 'Friend, the roast!'

³ I.e., the head, trachea, lungs and heart.

were named Buqu Qatagi, Buqatu Salji and Bodončar Mungqaq.¹

18 Belgүнүтеi and Бүгүнүтеi, the two sons born earlier to Dobun Mergen, said to each other, behind the back of their mother Alan Qo'a, 'Although this mother of ours is without brothers-*in-law* and male relatives, and without a husband, she has borne these three sons. In the house there is only the man of the Ma'aliq Baya'ut. Surely these three sons are his.' Their mother Alan Qo'a knew what they had been saying to each other behind her back.²

19 One day in spring, while she was cooking some dried lamb, she had her five sons Belgүнүтеi, Бүгүнүтеi, Buqu Qatagi, Buqatu Salji and Bodončar Mungqaq sit in a row. She gave an arrow-shaft to each of them and said, 'Break it!' One by one they immediately broke the single *arrow-shafts* and threw them away. Then she tied five arrow-shafts into a bundle and gave it to them saying, 'Break it!' The five *sons* each took the five bound arrow-shafts in turn, but they were unable to break them.

20 Then their mother Alan Qo'a said, 'You, my sons Belgүнүтеi and Бүгүнүтеi, are suspicious of me and said to each other, "These three sons that she has borne, of whom, of what *clan*, are they the sons?"' And it is right
21 for you to be suspicious. Every night, a resplendent yellow man entered by the light of the smoke-hole or the door top of the tent, he rubbed my belly and his radiance penetrated my womb. When he departed, he crept out on a moonbeam or a ray of sun in the guise of a yellow dog.

How can you speak so rashly?

When one understands that, the sign is *clear*:

They are the sons of Heaven.

How can you speak, comparing them

¹ I.e., 'Bodončar the Fool (or Simpleton).'

² Lit., 'behind the back of their mother.'

To *ordinary* black-headed men?

When they become the rulers of all,

Then the common people will understand!

22 Further, Alan Qo'a addressed these words of admonition to her five sons: 'You, my five sons, were born of one womb. If, like the five arrow-shafts just now, each of you keeps to himself, then, like those single arrow-shafts, anybody will easily break you. If, like the bound arrow-shafts, you remain together and of one mind, how can anyone deal with you so easily?' Some time went by and their mother Alan Qo'a died.

23 After the death of their mother Alan Qo'a, the five brothers divided the livestock¹ among themselves. Belgүнүтеi, Бүгүнүтеi, Buqu Qatagi and Buqatu Salji all took *their share*; to Bodončar no share was given, for they said that he was a fool and a half-wit, and they did not regard him as one of the family.

24 Bodončar, seeing that he was no longer counted as one of the family, said, 'Why should I stay here?' He got on a white horse with a black sore back and a mangy tail.² 'If I die, I die; if I live, I live!'³ he said and left riding fast downstream along the Onan River. He went on and when he reached Baljun Aral⁴ he built a grass hut⁵ and made his home there.

25 While he was living there, he once saw a grey female hawk eating a black grouse that it had caught. He made a snare with the hair of his white horse with the black sore
26 back and mangy tail, caught *the hawk* and reared it. When he had nothing to eat, he stalked the wild game which

¹ I.e., the family property.

² Lit., 'with a black stripe along the backbone, mid-back saddle-sores, and a hairless tail.'

³ Or: 'If he dies, I will die; if he lives, I will live!'

⁴ *Aral* means 'island' as well as 'peninsula.' See the Commentary.

⁵ Lit., 'a grass hut-tent.'

wolves had penned in on the cliffs. He shot and killed *the game*, and fed on it together with *the hawk*; they also gathered up and ate the food *left over* by the wolves. And so, feeding his own gullet and his hawk, he got through that year.¹

27 When spring came and the ducks *began* to arrive, he starved his hawk and let it loose. The ducks and wild geese *which the hawk had caught* he placed all about, so that

Every tree stump reeked with their stench,

Every dead tree with their foul smell.

28 From the northern side of *Mount Düyiren*, a band of people on the move came following the course of the *Tünggelik Stream*. After he had loosed his hawk in the day-time, Bodončar used to go to those people and drink kumis with them: at night he returned to his grass hut to sleep.

29 Those people asked Bodončar for his hawk, but he would not give it to them. Thus they got along together without the people asking Bodončar whose *son he was* and to which *clan he belonged*, and without Bodončar for his part asking them what people they were.

30 His elder brother Buqu Qatagi, saying that the younger brother Bodončar Mungqaq had left following the course of this *Onan River*, came in search of him. He asked those people who had moved down along the *Tünggelik Stream* about such-and-such a man with *such-and-such* a horse.

31 The people said, 'There is a man and a horse similar to *those* you ask about. He also has a hawk. Every day he comes to us, drinks kumis, then leaves. Where he spends the night no one really knows; but when the wind blows from the north-west, the fluff and feathers of the ducks and geese caught by his hawk are scattered and fly over here like swirling snow. He must live nearby. Now is about the time of his coming. Wait a little!'

¹ I.e., through that winter.

32 Within a short time a man came up along the *Tünggelik Stream*. When he arrived, it was indeed Bodončar. As soon as his elder brother Buqu Qatagi saw him, he recognized him; he led him away and set out, trotting off upstream along the *Onan River*.

33 Bodončar, who was trotting behind his elder brother Buqu Qatagi, said on the way, 'Elder brother, elder brother, it is right for a body to have a head, and for a coat to have a collar.'¹ His elder brother Buqu Qatagi did not attach any importance to these words of his. When he repeated the same words, his elder brother *again* ignored them and did not answer. Further along, Bodončar once more uttered the same words, to which his elder brother said, 'What kind of words are those you have just been repeating?'

34 Then Bodončar said, 'These people of a short while ago who are staying on the *Tünggelik Stream* make no distinction between great and small, bad and good, high and mean:² they are all equal. They are people easy to capture. Let us raid them!' His elder brother then said, 'Right. If this is so, as soon as we reach home let us consult with our brothers and raid those people!'

35 When they reached home, older and younger brothers discussed the matter together, then set out on their horses. They had Bodončar himself ride ahead as a scout.

36 Bodončar, as he was riding ahead reconnoitring, captured a woman who was in the middle of her pregnancy. He asked her, 'To which clan do you belong?' The woman said, 'I am an Adangqan Uriangqai of the *Ĵarči*'ut clan.'

37 The five brothers together robbed those people, and *in this way* got enough livestock, people to serve them, and a place to live.

¹ A saying, the meaning of which is that a group of people must have a chief to ensure proper leadership.

² Lit., 'head and hoof.'

40 The woman who was mid-way through pregnancy came to Bodončar and gave birth to a son. As he was the son of strangers, they named him Jařiradai. He was the ancestor of the Ĵadaran.¹ The son of that Ĵadaradai² was named Tügü'üdei. The son of Tügü'üdei was Būri Bulčiru. The son of Būri Bulčiru was Qara Qada'an. The son of Qara Qada'an was Ĵamuqa. These took the clan name Ĵadaran.

41 That woman also gave birth to a son by Bodončar. Since she was a captured woman, her son was named Ba'aridai. He was the ancestor of the Ba'arin.³ The son of Ba'aridai was Čiduqul Bökö, who had many wives and whose sons were born in great profusion.⁴ These took the clan name Menen Ba'arin.

42 From Belgünütei stemmed the Belgünüt clan; from Bügünütei, the Bügünüt; from Buqu Qatagi, the Qatagin; from Buqatu Salji, the Salji'ut; from Bodončar, the Borjigin.

43 From the wife that Bodončar himself had taken was born a son named Barim Ši'iratu Qabiči. Bodončar *also* took as concubine a housemaid of Qabiči Ba'atur's mother, who had come as dowry. She had a son by him named Ĵe'üredei. At first Ĵe'üredei could take part in the *Ĵügelü sacrifice in which meat is hung on a pole and offered to*
44 *Heaven.* After Bodončar's death he was excluded from it⁵ because – so they said – the Adangqa Uriangqai man⁶ was constantly in the house and Ĵe'üredei was probably his *son*. They made him take the clan name Ĵe'üreyit and he became the ancestor of the Ĵe'üret.

¹ These personal and clan names are explained, in popular etymology, from the word *Ĵat* (*Ĵad*) meaning 'foreign.'

² The 'Ĵadaradai' or 'man of the Ĵadaran *clan*' is, of course, Jařiradai.

³ *Bari-* means 'to seize, capture, abduct' – another example of popular etymology to explain a clan name.

⁴ *Mene metü* – hence the association with the clan name Menen.

⁵ Lit., 'they excluded that Ĵe'üredei from the *Ĵügelü*.'

⁶ Bodončar's son by his Adangqa Uriangqai wife, i.e. Jařiradai.

45 The son of Qabiči Ba'atur was Menen Tudun. The sons of Menen Tudun were Qači Külüük, Qačin, Qači'u, Qačula, Qači'un, Qaraldai and Način Ba'atur.

46 The son of Qači Külüük, Qaidu, was born of Mother Nomolun. The son of Qačin was named Noyagidai; because, by nature, he liked to act as a chief, *his descendants* took the clan name Noyakin. The son of Qači'u was named Barulatai. He had a big body and was a voracious eater; *therefore, his descendants* took the clan name Barulas. As the sons of Qačula were *also* voracious eaters, they were named Yeke Barula and Üčügen Barula;¹ they *too* had to take the clan name Barulas and it is these who became the Erdemtü Barula, the Tödö'en Barula and the other Barulas. The sons of Qaraldai did not observe seniority when they cooked² porridge; *therefore, their descendants* took the clan name Buda'at. The son of Qači'un was named Adarkidai; because he spread slanders among his elder and younger brothers, *his descendants* took the clan name Adargin. The sons of Način Ba'atur were named Uru'udai and Mangqutai; they took the clan names Uru'ut and Mangqut. Those *sons* of Način Ba'atur who were borne by the wife he himself had taken, were named Šiřu'udai and Doqoladai.

47 The sons of Qaidu were Bai Šingqor Doqšin, Čaraqai Lingqu and Čauřin Öртеgei. The son of Bai Šingqor Doqšin was Tumbinai Sečen. The son of Čaraqai Lingqu was Senggüm Bilge; *his descendants*, [beginning with] Senggüm Bilge's son Ambaqai [Qa'an], took the clan name Tayiči'ut. From a sister-in-law of Čaraqai Lingqu *who became his wife* was born a *son* named Besütei. *His descendants* took the clan name Besüt. The sons of Čauřin Öртеgei *and their descendants* took the clan names Oronar, Qongqotan, Arulat, Sönit, Qabturqas and Geniges.

¹ I.e., 'Big Barula' and 'Small Barula.'

² Lit., 'stirred.'

48 The sons of Tumbinai Sečen were Qabul Qa'an and Sem Sečüle.¹ The son of Sem Sečüle was Bültečü Ba'atur.¹ Qabul Qa'an's sons were seven. The eldest was Ökin Barqaq; *then came* Bartan Ba'atur, Qutuqtu Mōnggür, Qutula Qa'an, Qulan, Qada'an and Tödö'en Otčigin. These were the seven.

49 The son of Ökin Barqaq was Qutuqtu Yürki.¹ Qutuqtu Yürki's sons were Seče Beki² and Taiču. These took the clan name Yürki.

50 These four were the sons of Bartan Ba'atur: Mōnggetü Kiyan, Nekün Taiši, Yisügei Ba'atur and Dāritai Otčigin. The son of Qutuqtu Mōnggür was Büri Bökö. It was he who, *with his sword*, split open Belgütei's shoulder at the feast held in the forest by the Onan.³

51 The sons of Qutula Qa'an were Joči, Girma'u and Altan. The son of Qulan Ba'atur was Yeke Čeren. He was the master of the two freemen Badai and Kišiliq.⁴ Both Qada'an and Tödö'en were without issue.

52 Qabul Qa'an ruled over all the Mongols. After Qabul Qa'an, although he had seven sons, Ambaqai Qa'an, the son of Senggüm Bilge, became the ruler of all the Mongols by *Qabul Qa'an's* will.

53 Ambaqai Qa'an gave his daughter *as wife* to the Ayiri'ut Buiru'ut Tatars who were living on the Urši'un River, between Lake Buyur and Lake Kölen. As he was taking his daughter to them in person, Ambaqai Qa'an was captured by Tatar Jüyin men. When they were on their way to deliver him to the Altan Qa'an of the Kitat, Ambaqai Qa'an *contrived* to send a message *using* as messenger Balaqači, a man of the Besüt. He said to him, 'Speak to Qutula, the middle one of the seven sons of Qabul Qa'an,

¹ For this (incorrect) name, see the Commentary.

² Written Sača Beki elsewhere in the text.

³ For this episode, see below, § 131.

⁴ See below, § 169.

and of¹ *my* ten sons speak to Qada'an Taiši.' And he sent saying, 'When you become² *qa'an* of all and lord of the people, *learn* from my *example* and beware of taking your daughter in person to *her betrothed*. I have been seized by the Tatars.

Until the nails of your five fingers

Are ground down,

Until your ten fingers are worn away,

Strive to revenge me!

54 At that time Yisügei Ba'atur was hunting with falcons along the Onan River when he met the Merkit Yeke Čiledü who was on his way *home*, taking with him a girl of the Olqunu'ut tribe to be his wife. Leaning forward to have a *better* look, he saw that she was an unusually beautiful young woman. He swiftly rode back *to his tent*, *then* returned leading his elder brother Nekün Taiši and his younger brother Dāritai Otčigin.

55 Čiledü became frightened at their coming. He had a fast dun mare; he struck his dun mare over the rump and galloped away over a hill. The three men rode after him. Čiledü rounded the spur of the hill and got back to his cart. There and then Lady Hö'elün said to him, 'Did you notice those three men? Their look is odd: they look as if they want *to take* your life. If only you are spared,

In the front seat *of every cart*

There are girls;

In every black cart

There are women.

If only you are spared, you will *always* find a girl or a woman *like me*. If her name is different, name her also Hö'elün. Save your life! Never forget to breathe my scent!' She took off her shirt and he, on horseback, seized it with

¹ Lit., 'among.'

² I.e., 'When either of you becomes...'

his outstretched *hand*. By this time the three *men* had rounded the spur of the hill and were drawing near. Čiledü struck his fast dun mare on the rump, rode swiftly away and fled upstream along the Onan River.

56 The three *men* rode after him, chased him across seven hills and came back. Yisügei Ba'atur took the halter and guided *the cart of* Lady Hö'elün; his elder brother, Nekün Taiši, led the way, and his younger brother, Dāritai Otčigin, rode alongside the shaft *of the cart*. As they were proceeding, Lady Hö'elün said, 'My good lord! Čiledü is one

Whose tuft has never blown
Against the wind,
Whose belly has never hungered
In the steppe.

But how is it now? How fares he, with his two plaits tossing sometimes over his back, sometimes over his breast, now forward, now backward?' So she spoke, and she went on wailing loudly

Until her voice stirred the waters of the Onan River,
Until it resounded throughout wood and valley.

Dāritai Otčigin, riding beside her, said,

'The one who held you in his arms
Has *already* crossed many ridges;
The one you bewail
Has *already* crossed many streams.
If you call him, and he looks back,
He will not see you;
If you look for his tracks,
His trail you will not find.

Be quiet!' – he warned her. Yisügei then took Lady Hö'elün into his tent. Such is the way in which Yisügei carried off Lady Hö'elün.

57 According to the message of Ambaqai Qa'an, which had nominated both Qada'an and Qutula, all the Mongols

¹ Lit., 'elder brother', here a respectful term for 'husband.'

and Tayiči'ut gathered in the Qorqonaq Valley by the Onan and made Qutula *qa'an*. The Mongols rejoiced, and in their rejoicing they danced and feasted. After raising Qutula as *qan*, they danced around the Leafy Tree of Qorqonaq until there was

A ditch up to their waist,
And dust up to their knees.

58 When Qutula became *qa'an*, he and Qada'an Taiši moved against the Tatar people. They fought thirteen times with the Tatar *chiefs* Kötön Baraqa and Jali Buqa, but were unable

To take revenge,
To requite the wrong

for the slaying of Ambaqai Qa'an.

59 Then Yisügei Ba'atur captured the Tatars Temüjün Üge, Qori Buqa, and other Tatars. At that time Lady Hö'elün was pregnant, and as she was *staying* at Deli'ün Boldaq¹ by the Onan, it was right there that Činggis Qa'an was born. At the time of his birth he was born clutching in his right hand a clot of blood the size of a knucklebone. Because he was born when the Tatar Temüjün Üge had been brought *captive*, for this *very* reason they gave him the name Temüjün.

60 Yisügei Ba'atur had these four sons born of Lady Hö'elün: Temüjün, Qasar, Qači'un and Temüge. One daughter was *also* born, named Temülün. When Temüjün was nine years old, Joči Qasar was seven, Qači'un Elči was five, Temüge Otčigin was three, and Temülün was *still* in the cradle. [From Yisügei Ba'atur's second wife, Mother Sučigil,² Bekter and Belgütei were born.]

61 When Temüjün was nine years old, Yisügei Ba'atur set out to go to the Olqunu'ut people, relatives of Mother Hö'elün, taking Temüjün with him and saying, 'I shall ask his maternal uncles for a girl *in marriage for him*.' On the

¹ I.e., 'Spleen Hill.'

² Or Sučigil.

way, between *Mount Čekčer* and *Mount Čiqurqu*, he met Dei Sečen of the Onggirat.

62 Dei Sečen said, '*Quda* Yisügei, in whose direction are you going, coming this way?' Yisügei Ba'atur said, 'I have come here *on my way* to the Olqunu'ut people, the maternal uncles of this my son, to ask for a girl *in marriage for him.*' Dei Sečen said, 'This son of yours is a boy

Who has fire in his eyes,

Who has light in his face.

63 '*Quda* Yisügei, I had a dream last night, I did. A white gerfalcon clasp ing both sun and moon *in its claws* flew to me and perched on my hand. I told the people about this dream of mine, saying, "*Before*, when I looked, I could *only* see the sun and the moon *from afar*; now this gerfalcon has brought them to me and has perched on my hand. He has alighted, *all* white. Just what sort of good *thing* does this show?" I had my dream, *quda* Yisügei, just as you were coming here bringing your son. I had a dream of good *omen*. What kind of dream is it? The august spirit of you, Kiyat people, has come *in my dream*¹ and has announced² *your visit*.

64 'With us, the Onggirat people, from old days,
To have the good looks of our granddaughters
And the beauty of our daughters *is enough*:
We do not strive for dominion.
For those of you who have become *qa'an*,
We have our daughters with beautiful cheeks
Ride on a large cart to which we harness
A black male camel.
We trot them off *to the qa'an*,
And seat them by him on the *qatur*'s seat.
We do not strive for dominion, nor for people.

¹ I.e., as an omen of good fortune for the Onggirat people.

² I.e., has foretold.

We lift our good-looking daughters,
We have them ride on a carriage with front seat;
We harness a dark male camel,
We lead them off *to the qa'an*,
And seat them on the throne, at his side.

From old days, the Onggirat people

Have the *qatuns* as shields,

Have their daughters as intercessors.

We live thanks to the good looks

Of our granddaughters

And the beauty of our daughters.

65 With our boys, *when they seek a bride*,

One¹ looks at *the wealth* of our camp;

With our girls, *when they are sought as brides*,

One² considers *only* their beauty.

Quda Yisügei, let us go to my tent. My daughter is *still* small, take a look at her, *quda!*' So said Dei Sečen, and having led him to his tent he made him dismount.

66 When Yisügei saw his daughter, he saw a girl

Who had light in her face,

Who had fire in her eyes.

He was pleased with her. She was ten years old, one year older than Temüjin, and her name was Börte. Yisügei spent the night there, and the following morning, when he requested his daughter *for Temüjin*, Dei Sečen said, 'If I gave her away after much asking *on your part*, you would respect me; if I gave her away without much asking, you would despise me. But the fate of a girl is not to grow old in the family in which she was born. I will give you my daughter, and you, for your part, leave your son here as my son-in-law.' So they both agreed and Yisügei Ba'atur said, 'I will leave my son as your son-in-law, but my son is afraid

¹ I.e., the family of the bride.

² I.e., the family of the bridegroom.

of dogs. *Quda*, don't let him be frightened by dogs!' Then he gave him his spare horse as a pledge and went off, leaving Temüjin as his son-in-law.

67 On the way *back*, Yisügei Ba'atur met some Tatars who were having a feast in the Šira Ke'er¹ by *Mount Čekčer*. As he was thirsty, he got off his horse and *joined them* at the feast. But those Tatars recognized him: 'Yisügei the Kiyān has come,' they said, and remembered their grievance for his former raid upon them. With the secret intent to harm, they gave him poison² mixing it *with his food*. On the way *back*, Yisügei Ba'atur felt ill. He went on, and when after 68 three days³ he reached his tent, being in a bad way, he⁴ said, 'I feel sick within me. Who is at hand?' When they told him that Mönglik, the son of Old Čaraqa of the Qongqotat, was close by, he called him, made him come and said to him, 'Mönglik my boy, I have young children. I left my son Temüjin to be a son-in-law and, as I was coming back, I was secretly harmed by Tatar people on the way. I feel sick within me. You take care of your younger brothers,⁵ the little ones that I leave behind, and of your widowed elder sister-in-law.⁵ Go quickly and bring back my son Temüjin, Mönglik my boy!' He spoke and passed away.

¹ I.e., 'Yellow Steppe (or Plain).'

² Or, possibly, 'they grievously injured him' – by mixing poison with his food.

³ Lit., 'three days and nights.'

⁴ Lit., 'Yisügei Ba'atur.'

⁵ For these figurative terms, see the Commentary. Cf. also below, § 272.

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS

CHAPTER TWO

69 Heeding the words of Yisügei Ba'atur, Mönglik went and said to Dei Sečen, 'Elder brother Yisügei thinks constantly of Temüjin, his heart is aching. I came to get Temüjin.' Dei Sečen said, 'If my *quda* is longing for his son, let him go. But after he has seen him let him quickly come back.' And so Father Mönglik brought Temüjin back with him.

70 That spring, when Örbei and Soqatai, the wives of Ambaqai Qa'an, performed the *Qaǰaru Inerü sacrifice* to the ancestors, Lady Hö'elün *also* went, but as she arrived late she was left out *of the sacrificial meal*. Lady Hö'elün said to Örbei and Soqatai, 'You say to yourselves that Yisügei Ba'atur is dead, and as my sons are not grown yet, you deprive me of the share *of the offerings* to the ancestors, and of the sacrificial meat and drink that have been left over. Isn't this so? You have come to the point of eating under my very eyes *without asking me to partake of the food*, and of breaking camp without *so much as* awakening me!'¹

71 At these words the wives Örbei and Soqatai said,
 'You are one for whom the rule holds
 Not to be called and given *food*;
 You are one for whom the custom holds
 To eat if she chances upon *food*;
 You are one for whom the rule holds
 Not to be invited and given *food*;
 You are one for whom the custom holds
 To eat if *food* comes by her.

Is it because you say to yourself that Ambaqai Qa'an is dead, that we are being spoken to in this way, even by

¹ I.e., 'You would leave me out of everything.'

72 *one like you, Hö'elün? The best scheme for you, Tayiči'ut people, is: Leave these, mothers and children, in the camp and move on without taking them along!*

So they spoke, and the following day Tarqutai Kiriltuq of the Tayiči'ut, Tödö'en Girte and the other Tayiči'ut began to move downstream along the Onan River. As they set out, leaving behind Lady Hö'elün, the mothers and the children, Old Čaraqa of the Qongqotat went after them and tried to stop them, but Tödö'en Girte said,

'The deep water has dried up,
The shining stone is shattered.'

With this he moved off. Saying, 'Why do you hinder us?', Tödö'en Girte from behind speared Old Čaraqa along the spine.

73 Old Čaraqa returned to his tent wounded, and was lying in great distress when Temüjin went to see him. Then Old Čaraqa of the Qongqotat said, 'The people gathered by your good² father, the people of all of us, they have taken with them and moved away. When I tried to stop them, this is how I was treated.' At that, Temüjin wept and went out.

After *the Tayiči'ut* had left Lady Hö'elün behind and moved away, she held the standard and, riding off all on her own, brought back half the people. But even those people who were brought back did not stay, and *they too* moved off following the Tayiči'ut.

74 The Tayiči'ut kinsmen³ had moved away, leaving the widowed Lady Hö'elün with her small sons, the mothers and the children, in the camp, but

Lady Hö'elün was born
A clever woman
And she nourished her small sons thus:
Pulling firmly her tall hat

¹ I.e., 'The situation is beyond repair – it's all over.'

² I.e., 'late.'

³ Lit., 'brothers.' See the Commentary.

Over her head,
Tying tightly her belt
To shorten her skirt,
Along the Onan River,
Running up and down,
She gathered crab apples and bird cherries,
Day and night she fed
Their *hungry* gullets.
Born brave, the noble mother¹
Nourished her sons who were favoured
With *Heaven's* good fortune.
With a pointed stick from a spruce
She dug for *roots* of the great burnet,
And *for those* of the silverweed,
And so she provided them with food.
The sons who were fed on wild garlic
And on wild onion by the noble mother,
In time became rulers;
The sons who were fed on wild lily *bulbs*
By the high-minded, noble mother
Became lawful and wise.
The hungry, nagging sons
Who were fed on wild leek
And on wild onion by the beautiful lady,
Became handsome² and good,
And grew up into fine men
Truly valiant and bold.
Saying to each other,
'Let us feed our mother!'
They sat on the bank of Mother Onan,
They prepared their hooks and fished
Mean and paltry³ fish;

75

¹ Lit., 'the lady mother.'

² Or 'full of vigour.' The meaning of the Mongolian term is not clear.

³ Lit., 'Maimed and injured.'

Bending needle into hook,
 They fished for salmon and grayling.
 They made seines and dragnets,
 And caught fingerlings:
 Then, with grateful heart,
 They fed their mother.

76 One day while Temüjin, Qasar, Bekter and Belgütei were sitting together *on the river bank* angling, a shiny dace came onto *the line*. Bekter and Belgütei snatched it away from Temüjin and Qasar. Temüjin and Qasar came home and said to the noble mother, 'A shiny dace bit our hook, but it was snatched away from us by our brothers Bekter and Belgütei.' Thereupon, the noble mother said, 'Why be so malicious? [Stop it!] Why do you, older brothers and younger brothers, behave in this way to each other? Just when

We have no friend but our shadow,
 We have no whip but our *horse's* tail,

and when we ask ourselves how to take vengeance for the outrage *committed* by our Tayiči'ut kinsmen, how can you be at odds with each other, like the five sons of Mother Alan¹ of old? Stop it!

77 Thereupon, Temüjin and Qasar, displeased *with their mother's words*, said, 'Once *already*, the other day, a lark we shot with a knob-headed arrow,² they snatched it away from us, just like that. And now, again, they have snatched *something* the same way. How can we live together with them?' So saying they flung open the *felt* door and went out.

At that time Bekter was sitting on a hillock, guarding their nine horses, the light-bay geldings. Temüjin, hiding from behind, and Qasar, hiding in front, were approaching and about to draw out their arrows when Bekter saw them

¹ I.e., Alan Qo'a; see above, §§ 18-22.

² *Qodoli*, i.e. an arrow with a round, blunt head. See the Commentary.

and said, 'Just when we cannot put up with the outrage of our Tayiči'ut kinsmen and ask ourselves who shall be able to take vengeance on them, why do you regard me as a lash in the eye, a thorn in the mouth? When

We have no friend but our shadow,

We have no whip but our *horse's* tail,

how can you harbour such thoughts *towards me*? Anyway, do not destroy my hearth, pray do not make away with Belgütei!' So he said, and sat cross-legged, waiting *for their arrows*. Temüjin and Qasar, one from the front and one from the rear, shot at him at close range and went away.

78 When they came back and entered the tent, the noble mother understood *everything* from the looks of her two sons and said, 'You who have destroyed *life*!

From the warmth of my *womb*,

When he broke forth fiercely,

This one was born

Clutching a black clot of blood.

Like a Qasar¹ dog snapping at its own afterbirth;

Like a panther assailing a cliff;

Like a lion uncontrollable in its rage;

Like a dragon-snake swallowing *its prey* alive;

Like a gerfalcon that attacks its own shadow;

Like a pike swallowing in silence;

Like a camel *in rut* biting its foal's heel;

Like a wolf *stalking its prey* under cover of a blizzard;

Like a mandarin duck eating its chicks

When it cannot manage them;

Like a jackal ganging up *with its pack*

When one threatens its den;

Like a tiger never hesitant

When seizing *its prey*;

Like a brach attacking wildly,

You have destroyed!

¹ I.e., Khazar.

Just when

We have no friend but our shadow,
We have no whip but our *horse's* tail,
and when, unable to put up with the outrage of our Tayiči'ut
kinsmen, we ask ourselves who shall take vengeance on
them, you behave [in this way] to each other, saying that
you cannot live together!' Thus she spoke, and

Citing old sayings,

Quoting ancient words,

mightily reviled her sons.

79 Soon after this, Tarqutai Kiriltuq of the Tayiči'ut came
at the head of his bodyguard and said,

'The *little* rascals have shed their down,

The snotty ones have grown up!'

Frightened, the mothers and the older and younger
brothers barricaded themselves in the thick forest. Belgütei
tore out trees and, *hauling them up together*, erected a
palisade. While Qasar exchanged arrow shots, Qaçi'un,
Temüge and Temülün were thrust between clefts in the cliff.

They were battling *in this fashion* when the Tayiči'ut
shouted, 'Send out your elder brother Temüjin; we have no
need for the rest of you!' Upon this shouting, they put
Temüjin on a horse and made him escape. The Tayiči'ut
saw him fleeing into the forest and went in pursuit, but
Temüjin managed to steal into a thicket on the Tergüne
Heights. The Tayiči'ut could not get in, so they kept watch
round about the thicket.

80 Temüjin spent three *days and* nights in the thicket, then
he said, 'I will get out.' As he moved on leading his horse
after him, his saddle worked itself loose, *fell* from the horse
and was left behind. When he went back *and looked*, he
saw that the saddle had loosened and remained behind even
though the breast-strap was still attached and the saddle-
girth was still fastened. He said, 'The saddle-girth could of
course *have loosened up*, but how could the breast-strap also

have worked itself loose? Is this a warning from Heaven?'
He turned back and spent three more *days and* nights there.

When he started out again, a white rock the size of a
tent fell at the opening of the thicket, blocking the opening.
He said, 'Is this a warning from Heaven?' He turned back
and spent three more *days and* nights there.

After having been already nine days and nights without
food, he said, 'Why must I die so ignominiously? I will get
out!' With his arrow-sharpening knife he cut the bushes –
so thick that it was impossible to get out – around that white
rock, the size of a tent, which had fallen and blocked the
opening; he let his horse slip through and came out *of the*
thicket. But the Tayiči'ut were keeping watch: *as soon as*
he emerged they seized him and took him away.

81 After having taken Temüjin away, Tarqutai Kiriltuq
gave the order to his people that he should spend one night
in each *ayil*¹ in rotation. As this was happening, on the
sixteenth of the first month of summer, the day of the Red
Circle,² the Tayiči'ut held a feast on the bank of the Onan.
At sunset they dispersed. Temüjin had been brought to this
feast by³ a weak young man. After the people at the feast
had dispersed, *Temüjin pulled the leash of his cangue*⁴ away
from that weakling, hit him once on the head and ran away.
Then, telling himself that if he lay down in the forest by the
Onan he would be seen, he reclined on his back in the
water's stream and, letting his cangue float with the current,
he lay with *only* his face clear.

82 When the man who had let him escape called out in a
loud voice, 'I let the prisoner escape!', the scattered Tayi-
či'ut gathered together *again*. In the moonlight, *which was*
as bright as daylight, they searched the forest by the Onan.

¹ *Ayil*: a group of tents belonging to one family.

² I.e., 'of the full moon.'

³ I.e., 'in the charge of.'

⁴ *Buqa'u*: a heavy wooden board worn round the neck by prisoners.

Sorqan Šira of the Suldus happened to pass by and he saw *Temüjin* lying in the stream. He said to him, 'It is just because you are so clever, and because

There is fire in your eyes,
There is light in your face,

that your *Tayiči'ut* kinsmen are so jealous. Lie just so; I shall not tell them.' And with these words he went off.

When *the Tayiči'ut* said, 'Let's go back and search once more!', Sorqan Šira said, 'Let's go back each on his own way and search, looking at the places which we have not yet looked at.' They agreed and made a search going back by the very same way.

As Sorqan Šira again passed by him, he said, 'Your kinsmen are approaching, sharpening their teeth.¹ Lie just so and be careful!' And with these words he went off.

83 When *the Tayiči'ut* said, 'Let's go back and search once more', Sorqan Šira again spoke and said, 'Tayiči'ut princes, you have lost a whole man in a shining and bright day; how shall we find him now in the dark night? Let's go back each by his own way and search once more, looking at the places which we have not yet looked at, then let us disperse. Tomorrow we shall *reassemble* and look for him *again*. Where could that man go, with a cangue?' They agreed and went back searching.

As Sorqan Šira again passed by *Temüjin*, he said to him, 'We decided that we will go home after this search and look for you tomorrow. Now wait until we have completely dispersed, then go and look for your mother and younger brothers. If someone sees you, don't tell him you were seen and reveal that it was I who saw you!' And with these words he went off.

84 *Temüjin* waited until they had completely dispersed, then he thought to himself, 'The other day, when I was

¹ Lit., 'sharpening their mouths and teeth.'

made to spend the night *in each ayil* in rotation, I spent one night in the tent of Sorqan Šira. His two sons, Čimbai and Čila'un, felt in their hearts very sorry for me, and seeing me at night they took my cangue, relieved me of it and enabled me to spend the night *resting*. Again now, when Sorqan Šira saw me, he passed by without telling *anyone*. Now those same *people* will surely save me.' So saying he went downstream along the Onan River looking for the tent of Sorqan Šira.

85 The sign by which one recognized the tent was that, after pouring out *mare's* milk, they used to churn their kumis *all* through the night until daybreak. As he went, listening for this sign, *Temüjin* heard the sound of the churner and arrived there. When he entered the tent, Sorqan Šira said, 'Didn't I tell you to go and look for your mother and younger brothers? Why did you come here?' But his two sons Čimbai and Čila'un said, 'When a sparrow-hawk causes a sparrow to take shelter into a bush, the bush saves *its* life. How can you speak to him in this way, now that he has come to us?' And, displeased at their father's words, they smashed open *Temüjin's* cangue, burnt it in the fire and put him into a cart loaded with wool which was *standing* behind *the tent*. They entrusted him to the care of their younger sister called Qada'an, who was told not to say *a word* to a living person.

86 On the third day *the Tayiči'ut* said to each other that someone had probably hidden him. They said, 'Let us hold a search among ourselves', and *began* searching one another. They searched Sorqan Šira's tent, his carts, even under the beds. They climbed onto the cart loaded with wool which was *standing* behind *the tent* and pulled out the wool near the *front* opening. They were reaching the back of *the cart* when Sorqan Šira said, 'Anyway, in such heat, how could one stand it amidst the wool?' The searchers then stepped down and went away.

87 After the searchers had left, Sorqan Šira said, 'You nearly had me blown to *the winds* like *hearth-ashes*.¹ Now go, look for your mother and younger brothers!' He set *Temüjin* on a tawny barren mare with a white mouth, cooked him a lamb fattened on the milk of two ewes and provided him with a small and a large leather bucket *containing mare's milk*. He did not give him either saddle or steel for striking fire, but gave him a bow and two arrows. Having thus provided for him, he sent him *on his way*.²

88 So *Temüjin* set out and reached the place where they had *earlier* built the palisade and barricaded themselves. Following some tracks in the grass upstream along the Onan River – the Kimurqa Stream flowing into it from the west – he followed the tracks up along this *stream* and came upon *his own people* who were staying at the time at the Qorčuqui Hill of the Beder Promontory by the Kimurqa Stream.

89 Once they were reunited there, they left and set up camp at Kōkō Na'ur³ of *Mount Qara Jirügen*⁴ by the Senggür Stream, in the Gürelgü *Mountains* south of Burqan Qaldun. Here they stayed, killing marmots and field-mice for food.

90 One day *some* robbers came and stole the eight horses, the light-bay geldings, that were standing by the tent and made off with them before their very eyes. *Temüjin and his brothers* sighted *the robbers*, but being on foot fell behind.

Belgütei was then away marmot-hunting on⁵ a short-tailed, short-haired chestnut horse. He arrived on foot in the evening after sunset, leading behind him the short-tailed, short-haired chestnut horse, which was so laden down with marmots that it staggered. When he was told that robbers

¹ I.e., 'You nearly caused my ruin and that of my family.'

² For Tarqutai's own version of *Temüjin's* kidnapping, cf. below, § 149.

³ I.e., 'Blue Lake.'

⁴ I.e., 'Black Heart.'

⁵ Lit., 'riding.'

had stolen the light-bay geldings, Belgütei said, 'I will go after them!' Qasar said, 'You cannot cope with them, I will go after them!' *Temüjin* said, 'Neither of you can cope with them, I will go after them!' *Temüjin* got on the short-haired chestnut horse and went off in pursuit of the light-bay geldings, following the tracks *left* in the grass.

He spent three *days and nights tracking*, and in the early morning *of the fourth day* he met on the way a brisk lad milking mares in a large herd *of horses*. When *Temüjin* inquired about the light-bay geldings, the lad said, 'This morning, before sunrise, eight horses – light-bay geldings – were driven past here. I will show you their trail.' He made *Temüjin* leave the short-haired chestnut horse there, set him on a white horse with a black back,¹ and he himself rode a fast dun mare. And without even going to his tent, he put down his leather bucket and pail, concealing them in the grass.

'Friend', he said, 'you came to me being in great trouble, but men's troubles are the same *for all*. I will be your companion. My father is called Naqu Bayan.² I am his only son and my name is Bo'orču.'

They spent three *days and nights* following the trail of the light-bay geldings. Then, in the evening *of the fourth day*, just as the sun was setting on the hills, they came upon people in a circular camp. They saw the eight horses, the light-bay geldings, standing at the edge of that large camp, grazing.

Temüjin said, 'Friend, you stay here. As for me – the light-bay geldings are those there – I will go and drive them off!' Bo'orču said, 'I came with you as your companion. How can I stay here?' They raced in together and drove the light-bay geldings off.

¹ Lit., 'with a black stripe along the backbone.'

² I.e., 'Naqu the Rich.'

91 The men came after them in separate groups and *began* to pursue them. Away from the rest, one man on a white horse and holding a pole-lasso drew closer and caught up with them. Bo'orču said, 'Friend, give me the bow and arrows. I'll trade shots with him!' Temüjin said, 'I am afraid you'll come to harm because of me. I'll trade shots with him!' He swung around and they began to shoot arrows at each other. The man on the white horse stood up, aiming at him with his pole-lasso. His companions, who had *fallen* behind, caught up with him, but the sun sank, dusk came down and those men behind, overtaken by darkness, halted and were left behind *altogether*.

92 They rode all that night and then rode for three *more* days and nights before they reached *their destination*. Temüjin said, 'Friend, would I ever have got these horses of mine *back* without you? Let's share them. How many do you say you'll take?' Bo'orču said, 'I became your companion because you, a good friend, were in trouble and approached me, and I wished to be of help to a good friend. Am I *now* to take *the horses* as booty? My father is called Naqu Bayan. I am the only son of Naqu Bayan. The property of my father is ample for me. I won't take *the horses*. What sort of help would my help be? I won't take them.'

93 They arrived at the tent of Naqu Bayan. Naqu Bayan was all in tears for the loss of his son Bo'orču. When they suddenly arrived and he saw his son, he began both to wail and to scold. His son Bo'orču said, 'What is the matter? A good friend came to me in trouble, I became his companion and went with him. Now I have come back.' With this he rode off to fetch his leather bucket and pail which he had concealed in the grass. They killed a lamb fattened on the milk of two ewes and gave it to Temüjin as provision for the road; they also prepared a leather bucket *containing mare's milk* which they loaded on the horse. *In this way*, they provided for his journey. Then Naqu Bayan said, 'You two

young men *keep* seeing each other, never abandon each other!'

Temüjin left, and after travelling three days and three nights arrived at his tent on the Senggür Stream. Mother Hö'elün, Qasar and his younger brothers were worrying about him, but when they saw him they rejoiced.

94 Thereupon, Temüjin left with Belgütei downstream along the Kelüren River to look for Lady Börte, *the daughter* of Dei Sečen, from whom he had been separated since he had visited her at the age of nine.

Dei Sečen, the Onggirat, lived between *Mount Čekčer* and *Mount Čiqurqu*. When Dei Sečen saw Temüjin he was very glad. He said, 'I knew that your Tayiči'ut kinsmen were jealous of you, and I worried and despaired; and now at last I see you!' So saying he had him and Lady Börte united *as man and wife*, and then accompanied her *to her new home*.

Dei Sečen accompanied her and, as they approached *their destination* and *were still* on the way, he turned back at the Uraq Čöl Bend¹ of the Kelüren. His wife, the mother of Lady Börte, was called Čotan. Čotan escorted her daughter and took her to *Temüjin's home*, which at that time was on the Senggür Stream in the Gürelgü *Mountains*.

95 After *Temüjin* had sent Čotan home, he sent Belgütei to invite Bo'orču to join him as his companion. Bo'orču after receiving Belgütei did not say a word to his father, but

He jumped on his chestnut horse with the arched back, He tucked his grey woollen cloak behind him and came with Belgütei. This is how they became *firm* companions after first having joined in friendship.

96 From the Senggür Stream they moved on and set up camp on the Bürgi Escarpment at the source of the Kelüren River.

¹ Lit., 'Corner', i.e. the dry ground or plain in the winding of a river. See the Commentary.

Čotan had brought a black sable coat as a wedding present for *Temüjin's* mother. *Temüjin*, *Qasar* and *Belgütei* took away that coat. In earlier days, *Ong Qan* of the *Kereyit* tribe and their father *Yisügei Qan* had declared themselves sworn friends.¹ *Temüjin* said, 'As he and my father have declared themselves sworn friends, *Ong Qan* is indeed like a father to me.'

Knowing that *Ong Qan* was staying in the Black Forest by the *Tu'ula River*, he went there. When he came to *Ong Qan*, *Temüjin* said, 'Since in earlier days you and my father declared yourselves sworn friends you are, indeed, like a father to me.² I took a wife, and I have brought the wedding gift to you.' Thereupon, he gave him the black sable coat. *Ong Qan* was very pleased. He said,

'In return for the black sable coat,
I shall bring together for you
Your divided people;
In return for the sable coat,
I shall unite for you
Your scattered people. *Just as*
The place of the kidneys must be in the back,
That of good faith must be in the breast!'

97 From there they returned home. While they were living on the *Bürgi Escarpment*, from *Burqan Qaldun* came *Old Jarči'udai*, a man of the *Uriangqai* tribe, carrying his *smith's* bellows on his back and leading his son called *Ĵelme*. *Ĵarči'udai* said, 'When you *people* were at *Deli'ün Boldaq* on the *Onan River* and you *Temüjin* were born, I gave you sable swaddling-clothes *as a gift*. I also gave you this son of mine *Ĵelme*, but since he was *still* small I took him back. Now let *Ĵelme*

Put on your saddle,
Open your door.'

¹ *Anda*. See the Commentary.

² See below, § 150.

So he spoke and handed him over to *Temüjin*.

98 They had set up camp on the *Bürgi Escarpment* at the source of the *Kelüren River*, when early one morning – the light was yellowish as day *began* to dawn – *Old Qo'aqčın*, who was serving in the tent of *Mother Hö'elün*, got up and said, 'Mother, mother, rise up quickly! The earth is shaking and one can hear the sound of trampling hoofs: will they be the dreadful *Taiči'ut* approaching? Mother, rise up quickly!'

99 *Mother Hö'elün* said, 'Quickly wake the sons!' *Mother Hö'elün* also rose in haste. *Temüjin* and the other sons rose in haste too. They grabbed their horses. *Temüjin* rode one horse, *Mother Hö'elün* rode one horse, *Qasar* rode one horse, *Qači'un* rode one horse, *Temüge Otčigin* rode one horse, *Belgütei* rode one horse, *Bo'orču* rode one horse, *Ĵelme* rode one horse. *Mother Hö'elün* put *Temülün* in front of her on the horse. One horse was harnessed as a spare horse. There was no horse left for *Lady Börte*.

100 While it was still early *Temüjin* and his brothers set out in the direction of *Mount Burqan*. *Old Qo'aqčın*, in order to hide *Lady Börte*,

Put her into a ragged black covered cart,

Harnessed to it an ox with dappled loins,

and moved upstream along the *Tenggelik¹ Stream*. As she was proceeding in the dim light – the day was breaking – some soldiers came riding at a trot towards her. They surrounded her and went up to her, and asked her who she was. *Old Qo'aqčın* said, 'I belong to *Temüjin*. I came to shear sheep at the big tent and *now* I am returning to my tent.' On this, they said, 'Is *Temüjin* at home? How far is his tent *from here*?' *Old Qo'aqčın* said, 'The tent – it is nearby; but whether *Temüjin* is there or not I did not notice. I arose and left from the back.'

¹ = *Tüנגgelik*.

101 The soldiers then trotted off. Old Qo'aqčïn struck the ox with the speckled loins so that they would move along faster, but the axletree of the cart broke in two. As the axletree was broken, they¹ decided to flee into the forest on foot, but at that very moment the same soldiers came trotting up. Forced to sit on one of the horses behind the rider was the mother of Belgütei, both feet dangling *in the air*. 'What are you carrying in this cart?', they said. Old Qo'aqčïn said, 'I am carrying wool.' The elders of the soldiers said to their younger brothers and sons, 'Dismount and have a look!' The younger brothers and sons dismounted and, having taken off the door of the closed cart, sure enough *they found* a lady sitting inside. They dragged her out of the cart and made her come down; then, making both her and Qo'aqčïn ride behind, they took them away. Following the tracks left in the grass they went after Temüjïn in the direction of *Mount Burqan*.

102 In pursuit of Temüjïn they circled Burqan Qaldun three times² but could not catch him. They made detours this way and that – the swallowing quagmires and the tangled woods made so impenetrable a forest that a glutton snake could not creep in – and although they were on his heels they were unable to catch him.

The Three Merkit were Toqto'a of the Uduyit Merkit, Dayir Usun of the U'as Merkit and Qa'atai Darmala of the Qa'at Merkit. Now these Three Merkit had come to take their revenge because Mother Hö'elün had formerly been abducted from Čiledü.³ The Merkit said to each other, 'We have now seized their women to take our revenge for Hö'elün! We have had our revenge!' So saying they descended from Burqan Qaldun and returned to their homes.

¹ I.e., Old Qo'aqčïn and Lady Börte.

² See the Commentary for this hyperbole.

³ See above, §§ 54-56.

103 Temüjïn said to himself, 'Have these Three Merkit really returned home, or are they lying in ambush?' He sent Belgütei, Bo'orču and Jelme after the Three Merkit to spy on them for three days and nights, and having *thus made sure that* the Merkit had gone a long way off, Temüjïn came down from *Mount Burqan* and, beating his breast, said, 'Because Mother Qo'aqčïn's

Hearing is *as keen as* a weasel's,
Her sight *as sharp as* an ermine's,
I escaped with my own body *whole*.
I climbed the Burqan
On a horse hobbled with the halter strap,
Following deer tracks;
A shelter of elm twigs
I made my home.
Thanks to Burqan Qaldun
I escaped with my life, a louse's *life*.
Fearing for my life, my only *life*,
I climbed the Qaldun
On one horse, following elk tracks;
A shelter of broken willow twigs
I made my home.
Thanks to Qaldun Burqan¹
My life, a grasshopper's *life*,
Was indeed shielded!

But I was greatly frightened. Every morning I will sacrifice to Burqan Qaldun, everyday I will pray to it: the offspring of my offspring shall be mindful *of this and do likewise!*' He spoke and facing the sun, hung his belt around his neck, put his hat over his hand, beat his breast with his fist, and nine times kneeling down towards the sun, he offered a libation and a prayer.

¹ = Burqan Qaldun.

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS

CHAPTER THREE

104 Having thus spoken, Temüjin, with Qasar and Belgütei, went to To'oril Ong Qan of the Kereyit who was then staying in the Black Forest by the Tu'ula River. *Temüjin* said to him, 'The Three Merkit came, taking us by surprise; they seized my wife and carried her off. We have come *now* to ask you, O Qan my father, to rescue my wife and return her to me.'

To these words To'oril Ong Qan replied, 'Did I not speak with you last year? When you brought me the sable coat, you said, "Since in my father's time you *two* declared yourselves sworn friends, you are, indeed, like a father to me." When you put *the coat* on me, there and then I said,

"In return for the sable coat,
I shall unite for you
Your scattered people;
In return for the black sable coat,
I shall bring together for you
Your divided people. Let
The place of good faith be in the heart, *just as*
That of the kidneys must be in the back!"¹

Did I not say *this*? I shall now fulfil that promise and

In return for the sable coat,
Even to the complete destruction of the Merkit,
I shall rescue for you your Lady Börte.
In return for the black sable coat,
We shall crush all the Merkit,
We shall cause your wife Börte to return,
Bringing her back to you!

¹ See above, § 96.

Send a message to younger brother Ĵamuqa who must now be in the Qorqonaq Valley. I shall set forth from here with two units of ten thousand¹ and form the right wing *of the army*. Younger brother Ĵamuqa should set forth with two units of ten thousand to form the left wing. Let Ĵamuqa decide on the time and place of our meeting!

105 When Temüjin, Qasar and Belgütei came back from To'oril Qan's *camp* and arrived at their tent, Temüjin sent both Qasar and Belgütei to Ĵamuqa saying, 'Give my sworn friend Ĵamuqa this message: "When the Three Merkit came,

My bed was made empty.
You and I,
Are we not from one family?
How shall we take our revenge?
My breast is torn apart.
You and I,
Are we not of kindred blood?²
How shall we avenge this injury?"

He sent this message and these were the words he had them convey to his sworn friend Ĵamuqa. He also told them to report to Ĵamuqa the words spoken by To'oril Qan of the Kereyit: 'Remembering the help and good things done to me in former days by his father Yisügei Qan, I shall stand by *Temüjin*. I shall set forth with two units of ten thousand and I shall form the right wing. Send a message to younger brother Ĵamuqa that he should set forth with two units of ten thousand. As to the time and place of our meeting and joining *forces*, let younger brother Ĵamuqa decide!' After they had finished *delivering* this message, Ĵamuqa said, 'To know that my sworn friend Temüjin's

Bed has become empty,
Brought pain to my heart.

To know that his

¹ *Tümet*. See the Commentary.

² Lit., 'liver', i.e. close relatives.

Breast was torn apart,
 Brought pain to my liver.
 Taking our revenge,
 Wiping out the Uduyit and U'as Merkit,
 We shall rescue our Lady Börte!
 Taking our vengeance,
 Crushing all the Qa'at Merkit,
 We shall rescue your¹ wife Börte,
 Causing her to return!

Now,

That Toqto'a, who takes fright
 When one strikes the saddle-flaps, for
 He takes it for the sound of the drum,
 He must be in the Bu'ura Steppe.²
 Dayir Usun, who on *hearing*
 The rattle of a loose quiver
 Deserts his own companions,
 He must now be at Talqun Aral,³
 Between the Orqon and the Selengge.
 Qa'atai Darmala, who when the saltwort
 Is carried by the wind,
 Quickly flees into a dark forest,
 He must now be in the Qarajī Steppe.

Now, by the shortest way

We shall cross the river Kilqo –
 May the sedge be in good growth!
 We shall bind our rafts with it,
 We shall enter *their land*.
 Descending on the smoke-hole
 Of that coward Toqto'a's tent,
 Its proud frame⁴ we shall smite,

¹ Lit., 'our.'

² I.e., 'He-Camel Steppe (or Plain).'

³ Lit., 'Talqun Island' – but here a peninsula. Cf. above, § 24, n. 4.

⁴ See the Commentary.

So it collapses;
 We shall kill his wives and children
 To the last one.
 Of his door the sacred frame,¹
 We shall smite so it shatters;
 We shall utterly destroy his people
 Till nothing will be left.'

106 Further, Jamuqa said, 'Speak to my sworn friend
 Temüjīn and elder brother To'oril Qan, and say to them *on*
my behalf, "As for me,

I have consecrated² my standard
 Which is visible from afar;
 I have beaten my bellowing drum
 Covered with the hide of a black bull;
 I have mounted my swift black horse;
 I have put on my armour³
 And grasped my steel spear;
 I have placed on the bowstring my arrow with its nock
 Of wild peach bark.

I am ready, let us start

And give battle to the Qa'at Merkit!"

Then say to them,

"My long⁴ standard, visible from afar,

I have consecrated;⁵

I have beaten my deep-sounding drum

Covered with ox-hide;

I have mounted my swift horse,

The one with a black stripe along the backbone;⁶

I have put on my leather-strapped breastplate,

¹ See the Commentary.

² Lit., 'sprinkled.'

³ Lit., 'my steel-hard dress.'

⁴ Because of the long streamers made of yak tails.

⁵ Lit., 'sprinkled.'

⁶ Cf. above, §§ 24, 25 and 90.

And grasped my hilted sword;
I have placed on the bowstring my nocked arrow.
I am ready, let us fight to the death
Against the Uduyit Merkit!"

Then say to them, "After elder brother To'oril Qan has set out and, passing by my sworn friend Temüjin on the southern side of Burqan Qaldun, comes *jointly with him*, we shall meet at Botoqan Bo'orji at the source of the Onan River. When I set out from here, upstream along the Onan River where¹ my sworn friend's people are – with one unit of ten thousand *taken* from his people² and I with one³ from here making two units of ten thousand – going up along the Onan River we shall join forces at the appointed meeting place in Botoqan Bo'orji." And he sent them off with this message.

107 Qasar and Belgütei came and reported these words of Jamuqa to Temüjin, who had them conveyed to To'oril Qan.

Upon receiving Jamuqa's message, To'oril Qan took the field, two units of ten thousand *altogether*. When To'oril Qan set out, as he was approaching in the direction of the Bürgi Escarpment of the Kelüren on the southern side of Burqan Qaldun, Temüjin, who was *then* on the Bürgi Escarpment *and therefore* on *To'oril's* path, made way for him and, moving upstream along the Tünggelik, set up camp on the Tana Stream⁴ on the southern side of Burqan Qaldun. Temüjin then advanced from there with his troops. When To'oril Qan with one unit of ten thousand and To'oril Qan's younger brother Jaqa Gambu with one unit of ten thousand – two units of ten thousand *in all* – halted at Ayil Qaraqana on the Kimurqa Stream, *Temüjin* joined them and set up camp there.

¹ Lit., 'here.'

² Lit., 'from the sworn friend's people.'

³ Lit., 'one unit of ten thousand.'

⁴ I.e., 'Big Pearl Stream.'

108 Temüjin, To'oril Qan and Jaqa Gambu came together and started off from there. When they arrived at Botoqan Bo'orji at the source of the Onan River, Jamuqa had *already* reached the meeting place three days before.

Jamuqa, seeing the troops of Temüjin, To'oril and Jaqa Gambu, took up position, ranging his two units of ten thousand troops *in battle order*. They – Temüjin, To'oril Qan and Jaqa Gambu – likewise ranged their troops *in battle order*. *As soon as* they came face to face and recognized each other, Jamuqa said, 'Did we not agree that we won't be late

At the appointed meeting,
Even if there be a blizzard;
At the gathering,
Even if there be rain?

Are we not Mongols, for whom a "yes" is *the same* as being bound by an oath? We did agree that

We shall reject from our ranks
Whoever is remiss in his "yes."

To the words of Jamuqa, To'oril Qan said, 'As we are three days late at the meeting place, it is up to younger brother Jamuqa to punish and lay blame!' In this way they exchanged words of reproach about the meeting.

109 Starting from Botoqan Bo'orjin they arrived at the river Kilqo. They made rafts and crossed it. In the Bu'ura Steppe,

Descending on the smoke-hole
Of Toqto'a Beki's tent,
Of his tent the proud frame
They did smite so it collapsed;
They plundered his wives and children
To the last one.
Of his door the sacred frame
They did smite so it shattered;

They utterly plundered his people
Till nothing *more* was left.¹

While Toqto'a Beki was asleep,² some fishermen, sable catchers and wild animal hunters who happened to be by the river Kilqo, left it and, travelling all through the night, brought the news of *the allies'* approach saying, 'The enemies are coming, pushing forward at full speed.' When they received this news, Toqto'a and Dayir Usun of the U'as Merkit joined together, went downstream along the Selengge and entered the Barqujin *territory*. Few in number and dispossessed of all but their bodies, they escaped by taking flight.³

110 At night the Merkit people fled in disarray down the Selengge River, but even in the night our troops were pressing hard after the hastily fleeing Merkit. As the pillaging and plundering went on, Temüjin moved among the people that were hurriedly escaping, calling, 'Börte, Börte!' And so he came upon her, for Lady Börte was among those fleeing people. She heard the voice of Temüjin and, recognizing it, she got off the cart and came running *towards him*. Although it was still night, Lady Börte and Qo'aqčın both recognized Temüjin's reins and tether and grabbed them. It was moonlight; he looked at them, recognized Lady Börte, and they fell into each other's arms. After this, that very night Temüjin sent a message to To'oril Qan and to sworn friend Jamuqa saying, 'I have found what I was looking for. Let us not travel all night; let us camp here!' He had this message delivered to them. As for the Merkit people who had been fleeing in disarray at night, while *still* scattering and on the run, they *too* stopped and spent the night right there.⁴

¹ See above, § 105.

² Lit., 'lying down.'

³ I.e., they barely escaped with their lives.

⁴ I.e., where they happened to be.

This is how Lady Börte was rescued from the Merkit tribe, and how she was reunited *with Temüjin*.

111 At the very beginning, Toqto'a Beki of the Uduyit Merkit, Dayir Usun of the U'as Merkit and Qa'atai Darmala of the *Qa'at Merkit*, those three Merkit with three hundred men, said, 'In former days Mother Hö'elün was abducted by Yisügei Ba'atur from Yeke Čiledü, the younger brother of Toqto'a Beki', and they set out to take revenge for that. It was at the time when Temüjin circled Burqan Qaldun three times that they captured Lady Börte.¹ They entrusted her to Čilger Bökö, the younger brother of Čiledü. As Čilger Bökö had been looking after her ever since, when he fled, deserting his own companions, he said,

'To feed on scraps of skin
Is the black crow's lot – yet
It was goose and crane
It aspired to eat.
I, brutal and base Čilger, who laid my hand
On the noble lady,
I have brought disaster
On all the Merkit.
Lowly, base Čilger,
I have come to the point
That I shall lose my black head.
To save my *one and only* life,
I wish to creep into dark gorges.
Who will act as a shield for me?
To feed on rats and mice
Is the buzzard's, that vile bird's lot – yet
It was swan and crane
It aspired to eat.
I, thieving and base Čilger, who took away
The favoured and fortunate lady,
I have brought disaster upon

¹ See above, §§ 54-56 and 100-102.

The whole of the Merkit.
Boastful, base Čilger,
I have come to the point
That I shall lose my shrivelled head.
To save my life, worth but a sheep's dropping,
I wish to creep into dreadful, dark gorges.
Who will be a shelter for my life
Which is worth but a sheep's dropping?'

Thus he spoke, and escaped, deserting his own companions.
112 They seized Qa'atai Darmala and brought him back,
They forced him to wear a cangue *made of*
a wooden board,
They took him straight to Qaldun Burqan.¹

Someone informed them that Belgütei's mother was
'in that *ayıl*² *over there*.' Belgütei went there to fetch his
mother, but when he entered her tent by the right-hand door,
his mother, in a ragged sheepskin coat, went out by the left-
hand door. Outside she said to someone else, 'I am told that
my sons have become *qans*, but here I have been joined with
a base man. How can I now look my sons in the face?' So
she spoke and ran off, slipping away into a dense wood.
Belgütei Noyan immediately searched for her, but could not
find her. He *then* shot knob-headed arrows³ at any man of
Merkit stock, saying, 'Bring me my mother!' The three
hundred Merkit who had *once* circled *Mount Burqan*

Were exterminated, down to
The offspring of their offspring:
They were blown *to the winds* like *hearth-ashes*.⁴
Their remaining wives,
Those suitable to be embraced,⁵

¹ = Burqan Qaldun. Cf. above, § 103.

² See above, § 81, n. 1.

³ See above, § 77.

⁴ Cf. above, § 87.

⁵ I.e., to be taken as concubines.

Were embraced;
Those suitable to be let into *the tent*
Through the door *and serve as slaves*
Were let in through the door.

113 Temüjin, speaking gratefully to To'oril Qan and Ĵamuqa, said 'Being taken as a companion by my father the Qan and sworn friend Ĵamuqa, and with my strength increased by Heaven and Earth,

Called by Mighty Heaven,
Carried through by Mother Earth,
We emptied the breasts of the Merkit people
Who take their revenge as a man *does*,
And we tore their livers to pieces.
We emptied their beds¹
And we exterminated their relatives;
The women of theirs who remained
We surely took captive!

Thus we destroyed the Merkit people: let us *now* withdraw!'

114 At the time when the Uduyit Merkit were fleeing in haste, our soldiers found a little boy of five with fire in his eyes who had been left behind in the camp and whose name was Küčü. He had a sable cap, boots made from *the skin of* a doe's forelegs, and a dress of otter skins cleared of hair and sewn together. They took him and brought him to Mother Hö'elün, and gave him to her as a present.

115 When Temüjin, To'oril Qan and Ĵamuqa, after joining their forces

Had smashed the lock-carts,
Had captured the splendid women
of the Merkit, they withdrew from Talqun Aral, *between the* Orqan² and Selengge *rivers*. Temüjin with Ĵamuqa, with-
drawing jointly, went in the direction of the Qorqonaq Valley. On his way back, To'oril Qan passed by the

¹ I.e., of their wives.

² = Orqon (~ Orqan).

Hökörtü Valley on the northern side of Burqan Qaldun; *then* passing by Qača'uratu Subčit and Huliyatu Subčit,¹ where he hunted wild game, he withdrew in the direction of the Black Forest by the Tu'ula River.

116 Temüjin and Ĵamuqa got together and set up camp in the Qorqonaq Valley. Remembering how earlier on they became sworn friends, they said, 'Let us renew our mutual *pledge* of friendship, let us *now* love each other *again!*'

Earlier, when they had first become sworn friends, Temüjin was eleven years old. Ĵamuqa had given Temüjin a roebuck knucklebone, Temüjin *in return had given him* a copper knucklebone, *and so* they had become sworn friends. Having declared themselves sworn friends, they had played knucklebones together on the ice of the Onan River. There they had declared each other friends by oath *for the first time.*²

After that, in the spring, as they *practised* shooting with their firwood bows, Ĵamuqa *split and* stuck together the two horns of a two-year-old calf, bored holes in them, and gave *this* whistling arrowhead of his to Temüjin. In exchange Temüjin gave him a knob-headed arrow with a tip of juniper wood, and they became sworn friends *once more.*

This is how they declared themselves friends by oath for the second time.

117 They said to each other, 'Listening to the pronouncement of the old men of former ages which says:

"Sworn friends – *the two of them*

Share but a single life;

They do not abandon one another:

They are *each* a life's safeguard *for the other.*"

We learn that such is the rule by which sworn friends love each other. Now, renewing once more our *oath of* friendship, we shall love each other.'

¹ I.e., 'The Pass with Spruces' and 'The Pass with Aspens.'

² This is the first mention of their former oath of friendship.

Temüjin girdled his sworn friend Ĵamuqa with the golden belt taken as loot from Toqto'a of the Merkit. He *also* gave sworn friend Ĵamuqa for a mount Toqto'a's yellowish white *mare* with a black tail and mane, *a mare* that had not foaled for several years. Ĵamuqa girdled his sworn friend Temüjin with the golden belt taken as loot from Dayir Usun of the U'as Merkit, and he gave Temüjin for a mount the kid-white *horse* with a horn,¹ also of Dayir Usun. At the Leafy Tree on the southern side of the Quldaqar Cliff in the Qorqonaq Valley they declared themselves sworn friends and loved each other; they enjoyed themselves revelling and feasting, and at night they slept together, *the two of them* alone under their blanket.

118 Temüjin and Ĵamuqa loved each other one year and half of the second year. *Then* one day they decided to move on from their present encampment. They broke camp and set out on the sixteenth of the first month of summer, the day of the Red Circle.²

Temüjin and Ĵamuqa went together in front of the carts, and as they proceeded Ĵamuqa said, 'Sworn friend, sworn friend Temüjin,

Let us camp near the mountain:

There will be enough shelter

For our horse-herders!

Let us camp near the river:

There will be enough food³

For our shepherds and lamb-herds!'

Temüjin could not understand these words of Ĵamuqa and remained silent. Falling behind, he waited for the carts in the middle of the moving camp – for it was a moving camp – *then* Temüjin said to Mother Hö'elün, 'Sworn friend Ĵamuqa said,

¹ I.e., an excrescence or callosity on its forehead in the shape of a horn.

² I.e., 'of the full moon.' Cf. above, § 81.

³ Lit., 'food for the gullet.'

“Let us camp near the mountain:
There will be enough shelter
For our horse-herders!
Let us camp near the river:
There will be enough food
For our shepherds and lamb-herds!”

I couldn't understand these words of his, so I did not give him any answer and decided to come and ask you, mother.’

Before Mother Hö'elün could utter a sound, Lady Börte said, ‘Sworn friend Ĵamuqa, so they say, grows *easily* tired of his friends. Now the time has come when he has grown tired of us. The words which sworn friend Ĵamuqa has spoken just now are, therefore, words alluding to us.¹ Let us not pitch camp, but while we are on the move, let us separate completely from him and move *further* on, travelling at night!’ This, then, is what she said.

119 They *all* approved of the words of Lady Börte and without pitching camp they set off, travelling at night. As they proceeded, they passed the Tayiči'ut's *encampment* along the way. The Tayiči'ut, for their part, became frightened and that same night in great confusion actually moved to Ĵamuqa's side. In the camp of the Besüt *in the midst* of the Tayiči'ut, our *people* took a little boy by name of Kōkōčū who had been left behind in the camp. *When* they came back they gave him to Mother Hö'elün. Mother Hö'elün took him under her care.

120 They travelled all that night. At daybreak they saw Qači'un Toqura'un, Qaraqai Toqura'un and Qaraldai Toqura'un, the three Toqura'un brothers of the Ĵalayir *tribe*, drawing near *to join them* after having travelled throughout the night together. Then Qada'an Daldurqan of the Tarqut and his brothers – five Tarqut *in all* – also drew near. Then the son of Mōnggetū Kiyan, Önggür and the others, with their Čangši'ut and Baya'ut *followers* drew near too. From

¹ I.e., ‘words that conceal a scheme against us.’

the Barulas came the brothers Qubilai and Qudus. From the Mangqut came the two brothers Ĵetei and Doqolqu Čerbi. The younger brother¹ of Bo'orču, Ögölen Čerbi,² left the Arulat and also came to join his elder brother³ Bo'orču. The younger brothers⁴ of Ĵelme, Ča'urqan and Sübe'etei Ba'atur, left the Uriangqan and came to join Ĵelme. From the Besüt also came the two brothers Degei and Kūčügür. From the Suldus also came the brothers Čilgütei, Taki and Tayiči'u-dai. Seče Domoq of the Ĵalayir also came with his two sons Arqai Qasar and Bala. From the Qongqotan also came Söyiketü Čerbi. Sükegei Ĵe'un, the son of Ĵegei Qongdaqor of the Sükeken, also came. Čaqa'an U'a of the Ne'üs came too. There also came Kinggiyadai of the Olqunu'ut, Seči'ür from the Qorolas, and Moči Bedü'un from the Dörben. Since Butu of the Ikires had made his way here as son-in-law,⁵ he also came. From the Noyakin came also Ĵungso, and from the Oronar also came Ĵirqo'an. From the Barulas came also Suqu Sečen with his son Qaraçar. Then Qorči, Old Üsün and Kōkō Čos of the Ba'arin together with their Menen Ba'arin *followers* also came as one camp.

121 When Qorči came he said, ‘As we were born from the *same* woman captured and taken as wife by the august Bodonçar,

We are from the same womb,

We are from the one womb water

as Ĵamuqa. We would not have parted from him, but a *heavenly* sign appeared before my *very* eyes, revealing *the future to me*. There came a fallow cow. She circled Ĵamuqa and struck his tent-cart with her horns; *then* she butted him

¹ Here = ‘cousin.’ See the Commentary.

² Also written Ögölei, Ögöle and Ögele. For the title *čerbi*, see the Commentary.

³ Here = ‘cousin.’

⁴ Here = ‘cousins.’

⁵ Meaning Temüjin's brother-in-law. See the Commentary.

too, breaking one of her two horns. Being *thus left* with uneven horns, "Bring me my horn!" she kept saying, bellowing repeatedly at Ĵamuqa as she stood there, *hoofing up the ground and* raising more and more dust. Then a hornless and fallow ox lifted up the great shaft under the tent, harnessed it on to himself and pulled it after him. As he proceeded following Temüjin on the wide road, he kept bellowing, "Together Heaven and Earth have agreed: Temüjin shall be lord of the people!" and "I am drawing near carrying *the people* and bringing it to him." These *heavenly signs* appeared before my eyes; they revealed *the future to me*. Temüjin, if you become lord of the people, how will you please me for *this* augury?

Temüjin said, 'If it is indeed given to me to rule over the people *as you say*, I will make you a leader of ten thousand.'

Qorči said, 'What kind of happiness is it for me, the man who *foretold* so many great affairs, *merely* to become the leader of ten thousand? Make me a leader of ten thousand, *but in addition* allow me to take freely beautiful and fine girls from among the people, and let me have thirty as wives. And again, whatever I say, heed me closely!'

122 The Geniges, with Qunan at their head, also came as one camp. Then came Dāritai Otčigin – also one camp. From the Ĵadaran came also Mulqalqu. And the Ūnjin and the Saqayit came – also one camp. When *Temüjin* had parted company in this way from Ĵamuqa and had moved further on, setting up camp at Ayil Qaraqana by the Kimurqa Stream,¹ *there came*, also separating from Ĵamuqa, the sons of Sorqatu Ĵürki of the Ĵürkin, Sača Beki and Taiču – one camp; then the son of Nekün Taiši, Qučar Beki – one camp; and the son of Qutula Qan, Altan Otčigin – one camp. These, then, left Ĵamuqa and moved on, and when Temüjin set up camp at Ayil Qaraqana by the Kimurqa Stream, they

¹ See above, § 107.

joined camp with him. From there they went on, and camped at Kōkō Na'ur of *Mount Qara Ĵirügen* by the Senggür Stream in the Gürelgü *Mountains*.¹

123

Altan, Qučar and Sača Beki, all of them having agreed among themselves, said to Temüjin, 'We shall make you *qan*. When you, Temüjin, become *qan*, we

As vanguard shall speed

After many foes: for you

Fine-looking maidens and ladies *of rank*,

Palatial tents, and from foreign people

Ladies and maidens with beautiful cheeks,

And geldings with fine croups

At the trot we shall bring.

When in a battue² we hunt the cunning

Wild beasts, for you

We shall go ahead and round them up.

For you we shall drive the beasts of the steppe

Until their bellies press together;

For you we shall drive the beasts of the steep banks

Until their thighs press together.

In the days of war,

If we disobey your commands,

Deprive us of *all* our goods and belongings, and

Our noble wives, and cast

Our black heads on the ground!

In the days of peace,

If we violate your counsel,

Cut us off from our retainers and possessions, and

Our wives, and cast us

Out into the wilderness!'

Thus they pledged their word and in

This way they swore the oath *of loyalty*,

¹ See above, § 89.

² = a circular battue, i.e. a hunt in which the game is driven towards a central point. See the Commentary, § 115.

and made Temüjin *qan*, naming him Činggis Qa'an.

124 Having become *qa'an*, Činggis ordered the younger brother¹ of Bo'orču, Ögölei Čerbi,² to carry a quiver, Qači'un Toqura'un to carry a quiver, and the two brothers Jetei and Doqolqu Čerbi *each* to carry a quiver.

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

'We shall not let you go without
Your morning drinks;
We shall not neglect *your* drinks
In the evening!'

And so they became stewards. *Then* Degei spoke:

'In making broth
Of a two-year-old wether,
I shall not fail in the morning,
I shall not be remiss at night.
I shall tend pied sheep,
And shall fill the bottom of the cart with them.
I shall tend brown sheep,
And shall fill the sheep-fold with them.
I was a base and greedy man: *now*
I shall tend sheep,
And tripe shall I eat!'

So Degei tended the sheep. His younger brother, Güčügür³ spoke:

'I shall not let the linchpin slip
Off a lock-cart;
I shall not let an axle-cart collapse
On the road.

I shall manage the tent-carts!', he said. And Dödei Čerbi said, 'I shall be in charge of the domestics and servants in the tent!'

¹ Here = 'cousin.' See above, § 120.

² The Ögölen Čerbi of § 120 above.

³ The Küčügür of § 120 above.

Qubilai, Čilgütei and Qarqai Toqura'un together with Qasar *were ordered* to carry swords. To them Činggis Qa'an said,

'Cut the neck of the braggart,¹
Cleave the breast of the arrogant!'

And he said, 'Let Belgütei and Qaraldai Toqura'un
Be in charge of the geldings,
Be *my* equeries!'

And he said, 'Tayiči'udai, Qutu Moriči² and Mulqalqu shall tend the herds of horses!'

And he said, 'Let Arqai Qasar, Taqai, Sükegei and Ča'urqan
Be my far-*flying* shafts,
Be my near-*flying* arrows!'

Sübe'etei Ba'adur spoke:

'I shall be a rat,
And with the others
I shall hoard up *goods for you*;
I shall be a black crow,
And with the others
I shall gather *for you*
All that is *found* outside;
I shall be a felt covering,
And with the others
I shall try to make a cover *for you*;
I shall be a felt windbreak,
And with the others
I shall try to shelter you
From the wind on *your* tent!'

125 Thereupon, when Činggis Qa'an became *qan*, he said to Bo'orču and Jelme, 'You two,
When I had no friend but my shadow,
Became my shadows; and truly

¹ Plural in the text.

² I.e., 'Qutu the Horse-herder.'

³ A simile for trusted envoys.

Brought peace to my mind.
In my mind you shall dwell!’

And he said,

‘When I had no whip
But my *horse's* tail, you
Became my *horse's* tail; and truly
Brought peace to my heart.
In my breast you shall dwell!’

So he spoke, saying to them, ‘You two, who stood by me from the beginning, will you not be at the head of all these *here?*’

Further, Činggis Qa’an said, ‘When Heaven and Earth increased my strength and took me into their protection, you, the senior ones, who for my sake came *over* from sworn friend Ĵamuqa wishing to become companions, will you not be my lucky companions? I have appointed each of you to your respective office.’

126 He sent Daqai¹ and Sügegei² as envoys to To’oril Qan of the Kereyit with the message that Činggis Qa’an had been made *qan*. To’oril Qan sent them *back* with the following message: ‘To make my son Temüjin *qan* is indeed right. How can the Mongols be without a *qan*? *In future*

Do not break this, your agreement,
Do not dissolve your bond,
Do not tear off your collar!’³

¹ The Taki of § 120 and Taqai of § 124 et passim.

² The Sükegei (Ĵe’ün) of §§ 120 and 124 above.

³ I.e., ‘Do not reject your leader.’ Cf. above, § 33.

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS

CHAPTER FOUR

127 Činggis Qa’an sent Arqai Qasar and Ča’urqan as envoys to Ĵamuqa. Ĵamuqa said, ‘Give *this* message to Altan and Qučar: “Why did you, Altan and Qučar, cause a split between sworn friend Temüjin and myself,¹ by

Poking in the flanks,

Pricking the ribs

of the sworn friend?² Why did you not make sworn friend Temüjin *qan* when we were *still* together – without causing the sworn friend and me¹ to fall apart? Just what did you have in mind now, when you made him *qan*? You, Altan and Qučar, keep to the words you have spoken, put the sworn friend’s mind at ease, be the good companions of my sworn friend!”’ He sent them *back* with *this* message.

128 After that, when Taičar, a younger kinsman³ of Ĵamuqa, stayed at Ölegei Spring⁴ on the southern side of *Mount Ĵalama*, he went to steal the herd of horses of our Ĵoči Darmala, who was staying in the Sa’ari Steppe.⁵

Taičar stole Ĵoči Darmala’s herd of horses and took them away. The same Ĵoči Darmala, *thus* robbed of his herd, went *alone* in pursuit, his companions lacking the courage *to go with him*.

That night he arrived at the fringe of his herd. He approached crouching over the mane of his horse, shot and

¹ Lit., ‘us.’

² I.e., with stinging and malicious words. For Altan and Qučar’s role, see above, § 123.

³ Lit., ‘younger brother.’ See the Commentary, §§ 68 and 74.

⁴ Lit., ‘Cradle Spring.’

⁵ I.e., ‘Rump(-like) Steppe (or Plain).’

killed Taičar *with an arrow* that split apart his spine, then took his horses and returned.

129 Because his younger kinsman Taičar had been killed, Ĵamuqa, at the head of the Ĵadaran, and his allies making thirteen tribes and forming *altogether* three units of ten thousand, crossed the Ala'ut Turqa'ut' *Mountains* and moved against Činggis Qa'an. News of their approach was brought to Činggis Qa'an, who was then staying in the Gürelgü *Mountains*, by Mülke Totaq and Boroldai of the Ikires.

Informed of this, Činggis Qa'an with his thirteen camps formed also three units of ten thousand and set out against Ĵamuqa. They fought at Dalan Baljut:² Činggis Qa'an was repulsed there by Ĵamuqa and sought refuge in the Ĵerene Gorge by the Onon³ *River*. Ĵamuqa said, 'We have forced him to take refuge in the Ĵerene by the Onon', and, as he was about to return home, Ĵamuqa had the princes of the Činōs boiled *alive* in seventy cauldrons. Having cut off the head of Čaqa'an U'a of the Ne'ūs, he dragged it away *bound* to the tail of his horse.

130 Then, letting Ĵamuqa return home from there, Ĵürčedei of the Uru'ut at the head of the Uru'ut, and Quyuldar of the Mangqut at the head of the Mangqut deserted Ĵamuqa and came over to Činggis Qa'an. Father Mōnglik of the Qongqotat was then with Ĵamuqa. Father Mōnglik with his seven sons *also* deserted Ĵamuqa and joined Činggis Qa'an.

Because these tribes were coming in from Ĵamuqa's *side*, Činggis Qa'an rejoiced, saying to himself that the *whole* nation was coming over *to him*. Činggis Qa'an, Lady Hö'elün and Qasar, together with Sača Beki, Taiču and others of the Ĵürkin, decided to hold a feast in the forest by the Onan.

¹ I.e., 'Mottled Sentinels.'

² I.e., 'Seventy Marshes.'

³ = Onan (~ Onon).

In the course of feasting, one pitcher of *kumis* was first poured for Činggis Qa'an, Lady Hö'elün, Qasar, Sača Beki and others. As one pitcher was also poured *to the women* starting with Ebegei, the secondary wife of Sača Beki's father,¹ both QoriĴin Qatun and Qu'určün Qatun said, 'Why didn't they pour first for me, but began with Ebegei?', and they thrashed the steward Šiki'ür. As he was being thrashed, the steward Šiki'ür said, 'What sort of thing is it, your thrashing me like this, *just* because Yisügei Ba'atur and Nekün Taiši are dead?' So he spoke and cried out loudly.

131 That feast had been arranged on our *side* by Belgütei. He was standing *outside the camp* keeping Činggis Qa'an's geldings.² From the Ĵürkin's *side* Būri Bökō had arranged the feast.

A man of the Qadagin tribe stole a tether from our horse station. *Belgütei* caught the thief, but Būri Bökō took that man under his protection. *Now*, Belgütei, when wrestling, used to remove his right sleeve and go on *fighting* bare-armed. *On this occasion*, Būri Bökō's sword split open his shoulder, which had been left exposed and bare.³ Although cut in this way, still Belgütei, thinking nothing of it, did not bother and let the blood flow. But Činggis Qa'an, sitting in the shade, saw *what happened* from *the place* of the feast. He stepped out and said, 'How can we be treated like this?' Belgütei said, 'The wound isn't *that bad* yet! On my account, I fear we may fall out with our kinsmen. There is nothing wrong with me, I am recovering. Elder brother, now that we have just grown friendly with our kinsmen, do not act, wait a little while!'

¹ Lit., 'the little mother of Sača Beki' – 'little mother' being the designation of a secondary wife or concubine.

² As Činggis' equerry. See above, § 124.

³ This is the episode referred to in § 50 above.

132 Although warned in this way by Belgütei, Činggis Qa'an did not comply: breaking off tree branches, pulling out the churners of the *kumis* leather bags and grabbing them, they *started* to beat each other. *Činggis Qa'an and our men* overcame the Jürkin and forcibly seized both Qorijin Qatun and Qu'určin Qatun. *Later*, however, on being told, 'We¹ want to make peace', they returned both Qorijin Qatun and Qu'určin Qatun *to the Jürkin*.

It was when messengers were *still* being sent from one *side* to the other to make peace that *Činggis Qa'an* learned the news that the Altan Qan of the Kitat people, because Megüjin Se'ültü and others of the Tatar would not enter into an agreement with him, had then sent word to Ongging Čingsang that he should array his troops without delay *and set out against them*. *Thereupon*, Ongging Čingsang had driven Megüjin Se'ültü and the other Tatars, together with their livestock, upstream along the Ulja, and was *now* approaching.

133 Having learned this news, Činggis Qa'an said, 'From old days, the Tatar people have been our mortal enemies, the people who have destroyed our fathers and forefathers.² Now, *taking* this opportunity, let us jointly attack them!' And he sent an envoy to deliver this message to To'oril Qan: 'It is reported that the Altan Qan's *commander* Ongging Čingsang has driven the Tatar Megüjin Se'ültü and other Tatars upstream along the Ulja and is *now* approaching. Let us jointly attack the Tatars who have destroyed our fathers and forefathers. To'oril Qan, *my father*, should come quickly!'

When this message was delivered, To'oril Qan said, 'The word my son has sent is right. Let us jointly attack!' Thereupon, on the third day, To'oril Qan, having assembled

¹ I.e., the Jürkin.

² See above, §§ 53 and 67.

his troops, set out with his army and quickly went to his assistance.

Činggis Qa'an and To'oril Qan sent a message to the Jürkin Sača Beki and Taiču, and to the other Jürkin: 'Now, *taking* this opportunity, let us jointly attack the Tatars who from of old have destroyed our fathers and forefathers. Together let us set forth *against them!*'

They sent the message and having waited for six days from the time it should have come to the Jürkin, Činggis Qa'an and To'oril Qan, *unable to wait any longer*, together set out with their troops. As they approached, *moving* downstream along the Ulja to launch the attack in conjunction with Ongging Čingsang, the Tatar Megüjin and the other Tatars built a stockade there, at Qusutu Šitü'en and Naratu Šitü'en¹ by the Ulja. Činggis Qa'an and To'oril Qan captured those who had barricaded themselves in this way, *among them* Megüjin Se'ültü from the stockade. They killed Megüjin Se'ültü on the spot; Činggis Qa'an then took *as booty* his silver cradle and his blanket decorated with big pearls.

134 Činggis Qa'an and To'oril Qan [went to meet Ongging Čingsang and] told him that they had killed Megüjin Se'ültü. Ongging Čingsang was very glad when he learned that Megüjin Se'ültü had been killed. He gave Činggis Qa'an the title *ja'ut quri*² and, at the same time, he gave the title of *ong*³ to To'oril of the Kereyit.⁴ The name Ong Qan *thus* originates from the time when it was *first* given to *To'oril* as a title by Ongging Čingsang.

Ongging Čingsang said, 'You have done a very great service to the Altan Qan by your joint attack on Megüjin Se'ültü and by killing him. I shall inform the Altan Qan, of

¹ I.e., 'Birch Rampart' and 'Pine Rampart.'

² I.e., 'Commander of Hundreds (?).'

³ I.e., 'King' or 'Prince.'

⁴ Gereyit in the text.

this service of yours. Let the Altan Qan decide whether a title higher than the present one¹ should be further conferred on Činggis Qa'an – whether he should be given the title of *ĵautau*.² Rejoicing in this way, Ongging Čingsang withdrew from there.

On that occasion, Činggis Qa'an and Ong Qan plundered the Tatars and shared *the booty*, each taking *his part*; then they returned to their *own* encampments.³

135 At the time when our troops were plundering the camp at Naratu Šiti'en where the Tatars had halted and barricaded themselves, they happened to find in the camp a little boy who had been abandoned. Taking back the little boy, who had as *nose-ring* a golden loop and who wore a gold-stitched silken waistcoat lined with sable, Činggis Qa'an gave him as a present to Mother Hö'elün. Mother Hö'elün said, 'He must be the son of a man of rank; surely he is the offspring of a man of noble origins!' The Mother named him Šikiken Quduqu⁴ and brought him up as the younger brother of her five children and as her sixth child.

136 The base camp of Činggis Qa'an was at Lake Hariltu. From among those who had remained at the base camp, the Jürkin stripped fifty men of their clothing and killed ten men.

When those of us who were left at the base camp told Činggis Qa'an that they had been treated in that way by the Jürkin, Činggis Qa'an on hearing this news became very angry and said, 'How could we be treated in such a manner by the Jürkin? When we held a feast in the forest by the Onan they also thrashed the steward Šiki'ür, and it was they who also cut Belgütei's shoulder. We were told we should make peace, and gave them back both Qoriĵin Qatun and

¹ Lit., 'this.'

² I.e., 'Pacification Commissioner.'

³ Lit., 'they went back and set up camp.'

⁴ = Šigiken Qutuqu. See below, § 138, and the Commentary.

Qu'určın. After that, we said that we would set out and jointly attack the Tatars who, full of hatred and resentment, had from old destroyed our fathers and forefathers. Although we waited six days for the Jürkin, they failed us by not coming.¹ And now, by siding *in this way* with² the enemy, they themselves have also become our enemies!' Having said this, Činggis Qa'an moved against the Jürkin.

When the Jürkin were staying at Dolo'an Bolda'ut³ of Ködö'e Aral⁴ on the Kelüren River, Činggis Qa'an plundered their people. Sača Beki and Taiču, being few in number and dispossessed of all but their bodies, escaped.⁵ He pursued them and, overtaking them at the Telētü Pass, he caught Sača Beki and Taiču.

After their capture, Činggis Qa'an said to Sača and Taiču, 'What did we agree upon in the old days?' Being so addressed, Sača and Taiču said, 'We did not keep to the words we spoke. Now make us comply with them!'⁶ And, admitting their oath, they held out their necks to *the sword*.

Making them to admit their oath and causing them to comply with their words, he executed them and cast off *their bodies* there and then.

137 Having disposed of Sača and Taiču he returned to *the Jürkin camp*. As he was about to move the Jürkin people away, the three sons of Telegetü Bayan of the Ĵalayir, Gü'ün U'a, Čila'un Qayıči and Ĵebke, were with these Jürkin at the time. Gü'ün U'a, with his two sons Muqali and Buqa, came to pay homage to Činggis Qa'an and said,

'Let these sons of mine be the slaves
Of your threshold;⁷

¹ See above, §§ 132 and 133.

² Lit., 'leaning on.'

³ I.e., 'Seven Solitary Hills.'

⁴ I.e., 'Barren Island', but see the Commentary.

⁵ Cf. above, § 109.

⁶ Lit., 'with our words.'

⁷ For this expression see the Commentary.

If they stray from your threshold,
Cut off their heel tendons!
Let them be the personal slaves
Of your door;¹
If they abandon your door,
Cut out their livers and
Cast them away!

So saying he handed them over to him.

Čila'un Qayıči with his two sons Tüngge² and Qaši also came to pay homage to Činggis Qa'an and spoke thus:

"Let them guard
Your golden threshold", so saying,
I give you *these sons of mine*;
If they depart from your golden threshold,
Put an end to their lives and
Cast them away!

"Let them lift for you
The wide *felt* door", so saying,
I give them to you;
If they desert your wide door,
Kick them in the pit of the stomach and
Cast them away!

Thus he spoke. Činggis Qa'an gave Ĵebke to Qasar. Ĵebke, bringing with him from the Ĵürkin camp a little boy called Boro'ul, paid homage to Mother Hö'elün and gave him to her.

138 Mother Hö'elün reared in her tent these four: the boy called Güčü³ found in the Merkit camp, the boy called Kōkōčü found in the Besüt camp among the Tayiči'ut, the boy called Šigiken Qutuqu found in the Tatar camp, and the boy called Boro'ul found in the Ĵürkin camp. Mother Hö'elün said, 'Whom *but these foundlings* will I make

¹ For this expression see the Commentary.

² Called Tüge in §§ 202 and 225 below.

³ Written Kūčü in § 114 above.

Eyes, for my sons to see in the day,
Ears, for my sons to hear at night?

– and reared them in her tent.

139 As for the manner in which those Ĵürkin people came to be Ĵürkin, the eldest¹ among the seven sons of Qabul Qan was Ökin Barqaq, whose son was Sorqatu Ĵürki. <As they came to be Ĵürkin> Qabul Qan, saying that Ökin Barqaq was his eldest son,² chose *men for him* from among his own people and, having chosen them, gave him strong and mighty *men* who had

Gall in their livers,³
Thumbs good at shooting,
Lungs filled with courage,
Mouths full of fury,
And, all, men of skill.

Because they had fury and gall, and were proud and inflexible, that is the reason why they were called Ĵürkin.

Činggis Qa'an subjugated such a proud people and destroyed *all* those who were of the Ĵürkin clan. He⁴ made the tribe and its people his *personal* subjects.

140 One day Činggis Qa'an said, 'Let us make Būri Bökō and Belgūtei wrestle with each other!'

Formerly, when Būri Bökō was *still* with the Ĵürkin, seizing Belgūtei with one hand and tripping him with one foot, Būri Bökō toppled him and held him down so that he could not move.⁵ Būri Bökō was the strongest man among his people.

Činggis Qa'an now made Belgūtei and Būri Bökō wrestle. Būri Bökō, the invincible, let himself be toppled. Belgūtei, unable to hold him down, grabbed his shoulders

¹ Lit., 'the eldest brother.'

² Lit., 'saying that he was the eldest brother of Qabul Qan's sons.'

³ I.e., who were brave and daring.

⁴ Lit., 'Činggis Qa'an.'

⁵ There is no previous mention of this episode.

and straddled him.⁷ Belgütei glanced backwards and, when he caught sight of Činggis Qa'an's eye, the Qa'an bit his lower lip. Belgütei understood. He sat on top of *Büri Bökö* and, crossing the two *ends* of his collar, he pulled them towards himself, tightening *his grip*. As he did that, he pressed his knee on his spine and broke it.

Büri Bökö, his spine broken, said, 'I would not have been defeated by Belgütei, but fearing the Qa'an, I took a fall on purpose. I hesitated, so I lost my life.' Thus he spoke and died.

After Belgütei had pulled and broken his spine, he dragged *Büri Bökö* away, cast him off and left.

Of the seven sons of Qabul Qan, Ökin Barqaq was the eldest; the next one was Bartan Ba'atur, whose son was Yisügei Ba'atur. The next one after him¹ was Qutuqtu Mönögl, ² whose son was Büri. Overstepping *the line* of the sons of Bartan Ba'atur which was nearest above him *in order of seniority*, he became a companion of the proud sons of Barqaq. Because of this, Büri Bökö, the strongest man among his people, perished, his spine broken by Belgütei.

141 After that, in the Year of the Hen (1201), the Qadagin and the Salji'ut united, and the following³ tribes gathered at Alqui Spring:⁴ the Qadagin led by Buqu Čorogi of the Qadagin, and *the Salji'ut* led by Čirgidai Ba'atur of the Šalji'ut; the Dörben, who had made peace with the Tatar, led by Qaji'un Beki of the Dörben, and *the Tatar* led by Jalin Buqa of the Alči Tatar; the Ikires led by Tüge Maqa of the Ikires; *the Onggirat* led by Terge Emel, Alqui and others of the Onggirat; *the Qorolas* led by Čonaq Čaqa'an⁵ and

¹ I.e., after Bartan Ba'atur.

² The Qutuqtu Mönögl of §§ 48 and 50 above.

³ Lit., 'these.'

⁴ Lit., 'Sarsaparilla Spring.'

⁵ ? Čo'oq Čaqa'an, ? Čo'os Čaqa'an. See the Commentary also for the other names in this section.

others of the Qorolas; *also* Buyuruq Qan of the Güčü'üt Naiman from the Naiman; Qutu, the son of Toqto'a Beki of the Merkit; Quduqa Beki of the Oyirat; and, from the Tayiči'ut, Tarqutai Kiriltuq, Qodun Örceng, A'uču Ba'atur and other Tayiči'ut. Saying, 'Let us raise Jamuqa the Jajirat as *qan*', they jointly hacked the backs of a stallion and a mare and together swore an oath of friendship.

From there they moved downstream along the Ergüne River, and on the large promontory of the peninsula where the Kan River flows into the Ergüne, there they raised Jamuqa as *gür qan*.¹ After raising him as *gür qan*, they decided to set out to attack Činggis Qa'an and Ong Qan.

Word of this – that they had decided to attack – was sent by Qoridai of the Qorolas to Činggis Qa'an, when he² was staying in the Gürelgü Mountains.

When he received this news, Činggis Qa'an passed it³ on to Ong Qan. As soon as Ong Qan received the news, he⁴ set his army in motion and speedily arrived at Činggis Qa'an's camp.

142 After getting Ong Qan to come, Činggis Qa'an and Ong Qan decided to move jointly against Jamuqa. They set out downstream along the Kelüren River. Činggis Qa'an sent Altan, Qučar and Dāritai as vanguard; Ong Qan *for his part* sent as vanguards Senggüm, Jaqa Gambu and Bilge Beki. Patrols were also dispatched ahead of these vanguards: at Enegen Güiletü⁵ they set up an observation post; beyond that, at *Mount Čekčer*, they set up *another* observation post; and beyond that, at *Mount Čiqurqu*, they set up *a further* observation post.

¹ I.e., 'Universal Ruler.'

² I.e., Činggis Qa'an.

³ Lit., 'this news.'

⁴ Lit., 'Ong Qan.'

⁵ I.e., 'Having a Single Apricot Tree (?).'

Altan, Qučar, Senggüm and the others of our vanguard arrived at Utkiya. While they were deciding whether to camp *there*, a man from the observation *post* which had been set up at Čiqurqu came riding in haste and brought the news that the enemy was approaching.

When this news came, without setting up camp they went towards the enemy in order to gain information. They met and gained the information: when they asked *the enemy patrol* who they were, *it turned out to be* Ĵamuqa's vanguard consisting of A'uču Ba'atur of the Mongols, Buyiruq Qan of the Naiman, Qutu, the son of Toqto'a Beki of the Merkit, and Quduqa Beki of the Oyirat. These four had been going *towards us* as Ĵamuqa's vanguard.

Our vanguard shouted at them, and they shouted *back*, but it was *already* getting late. Saying, 'Tomorrow we'll fight!', *our men* withdrew and spent the night together with the main body *of the army*.

143 Next day *the troops* were sent forward and when they met, at Köyiten,¹ they battled. As they pressed on each other downhill and uphill, and reformed their ranks, those very same Buyiruq Qan and Quduqa, knowing how to produce a rainstorm by magic, started to conjure it² up, but the magic storm rolled back and it was right upon themselves that it² fell. Unable to proceed, they tumbled into ravines. Saying to each other, 'We are not loved by Heaven!', they scattered.

144 Buyiruq Qan of the Naiman separated *from the rest* and went towards Uluq Taq³ on the southern side of the Altai *Mountains*. Qutu, the son of Toqto'a of the Merkit, went towards the Selengge *River*. Quduqa Beki of the Oyirat went towards the Šisgis *River*, making for the forest. A'uču Ba'atur of the Tayiči'ut went towards the Onan *River*.

¹ I.e., 'Cold.'

² Lit., 'the magic storm.'

³ I.e., 'Great Mountain' (tu.).

Ĵamuqa plundered the *very* people who had elected him *qan*; *then* he¹ moved homewards following the course of the Ergüne. As they were dispersing in this way, Ong Qan pursued Ĵamuqa downstream along the Ergüne *while* Činggis Qa'an pursued A'uču Ba'atur of the Tayiči'ut in the direction of the Onan.

As soon as A'uču Ba'atur reached his own people, he had them moved along *with him* in haste. The Tayiči'ut A'uču Ba'atur and Qodun Örceng arrayed their troops at Ülengüt Turas² on the other side of the Onan, and stood in battle order ready to fight.³

Činggis Qa'an came up and fought with the Tayiči'ut. They battled to and fro incessantly until evening came; *then*, in the same place where they had been fighting, they passed the night right next to each other. When people⁴ arrived, fleeing in disarray, they set up a circular camp and also passed the night in the same spot, alongside their troops.

145 In that battle Činggis Qa'an was wounded in a vein of the neck. He could not stop the bleeding and was in a great plight. He waited till sundown, *then* he pitched camp just there *where the two armies had encamped* right next to each other.

Ĵelme sucked and sucked the blood which clogged Činggis Qa'an's wound and his mouth was *all* smeared with blood. *Still*, Ĵelme, not trusting other people, stayed there and looked after him. Until the middle of the night he swallowed down or spat out mouthfuls of the clogging blood.

When midnight had passed Činggis Qa'an revived and said, 'The blood has dried up completely; I am thirsty.' Then Ĵelme took off his hat, boots and clothes – everything

¹ Lit., 'Ĵamuqa.'

² For this reading see the Commentary.

³ Lit., 'saying, "We shall fight!".'

⁴ I.e., the refugees.

– and stark naked but for his pants, he ran into the midst of the enemy who had settled right next to them. He jumped on to a cart of the people who had set up a circular camp over there. He searched for kumis, but was unable to *find any* because *those people* had fled in disarray and had turned the mares loose without milking them.

As he could not find kumis, he took from one of their carts a large covered *bucket of curds* and carried it back. In the time between his going and coming back he was not seen by anyone. Heaven indeed protected him!

Having brought the covered *bucket of curds*, the same Jelme, all by himself, searched for water, brought it back, and having mixed it with the curds got the Qa'an to drink it.

Three times, resting *in between*, the Qa'an drank, *then* he spoke: 'The eyes within me have cleared up.' He spoke and sat up: it was daybreak and growing light. He looked *and saw* that, all about *the place* where he was sitting, the *wound-clogging* blood that Jelme had kept on sucking and had spat about had formed small puddles. When he saw it, Činggis Qa'an said, 'What is this? Couldn't you have spat farther away?' Jelme then said, 'When you were in a great plight, had I gone farther away I would have feared being separated from you. As I was in haste, I swallowed what I could swallow and spat out what I could spit out; I was in a plight *myself* and quite a lot went also into my stomach!'

Činggis Qa'an again spoke: 'When I was in this state, lying down, why did you run naked into *their camp*? Had you been caught, wouldn't you have revealed that I was like this?' Jelme said, 'My thought, as I went naked, was that if somehow I got caught, I would have said, "I wanted to submit to you, but they¹ found out and, seizing me, decided to kill me. They removed my clothes – everything – only my pants had not yet been removed when I suddenly *managed* to escape and have just come in haste to *join* you."

¹ I.e., Činggis Qa'an's people.

They would have regarded me as sincere, they would have given me clothes and looked after me. Then, I would have jumped on a horse and while they were *astonished* watching me *flee*, in that brief moment I would have surely got back! So thinking, and because I wished to get *back* in time to *satisfy* the Qa'an's craving *for drink* caused by his parching thirst, thinking this and without *so much as* blinking an eye I went there.'

Činggis Qa'an said, 'What can I say now? In former days, when the Three Merkit came and thrice circled *Mount Burqan*, you saved my life for the first time.¹ Now, once more, you restored me to life when, with your mouth, you sucked the clotting blood *from my wound*. And, yet again, when I was in a great plight with a parching thirst, disregarding your life, you went amidst the enemy without *so much as* blinking an eye; you quenched my thirst and restored life to me. These three services of yours will stay in my heart!' Thus *the Qa'an* spoke.

146 When it had grown light, it turned out that the *enemy* troops who were bivouacking right next to us had dispersed during the night; *only* the people who had set up the circular camp had not moved from the place where they had encamped because they would not have been able to get away.

Činggis Qa'an moved from the place where he had spent the night in order to bring back² the people who had fled. As he was bringing back the fugitives, Činggis Qa'an himself heard a woman in a red coat who, standing on top of a ridge, was wailing loudly, crying 'Temüjin!' He sent a man to enquire whose wife was the woman who was crying like that. The man went and, having asked her, that woman said, 'I am the daughter of Sorqan Šira and my name is

¹ This event is not recorded in § 102 above.

² I.e., to recapture.

Qada'an.¹ The soldiers here captured my husband and were going to kill him. As my husband was being killed, I cried and wailed and called on Temüjin to save my husband.' So she said, and the man returned and reported these words to Činggis Qa'an.

Hearing these words, Činggis Qa'an rode at a trot and reached her; he² dismounted near Qada'an and they embraced each other, but her husband had already been killed by our soldiers.

After Činggis Qa'an had brought back those people, he camped on the spot for the night with his great army. He invited Qada'an to come to him and had her sit by his side.

The following day, Sorqan Šira and Ĵebe, who had been retainers of Tödöge of the Tayiči'ut, also arrived – the two of them. Činggis Qa'an said to Sorqan Šira, 'It was indeed a good service of you, father and sons,

To throw to the ground
The heavy wood on my neck,
To remove the wooden cangue
That was on my collar.

Why, *then*, did you delay *coming to me*?'

Sorqan Šira said, 'At heart I felt full confidence in you, but how could I make haste? Had I hurried and come to you earlier, my Tayiči'ut masters would have blown to *the winds*, like *hearth-ashes*,³ my wife and children, and the cattle and provisions I had left behind. Because of this I did not hurry, but now *that the Tayiči'ut have been defeated* we came in haste to join our Qa'an.' When he had finished speaking, Činggis Qa'an said, 'You did right!'

147 Again Činggis Qa'an spoke, saying 'When we fought at Köyiten and, pressing on each other, were reforming our ranks, from the top of those ridges an arrow came. Who,

¹ She is mentioned in § 85 above.

² Lit., 'Činggis Qa'an.'

³ Cf. above, §§ 87 and 112.

from the top of the mountain, shot an arrow so as to sever the neckbone of my tawny war horse with the white mouth?'

To these words Ĵebe said, 'I shot the arrow from the top of the mountain. If now I am put to death by the Qa'an, I shall be left to rot on *a piece of earth* the size of the palm of *a hand*, but if I be favoured,

For the Qa'an I will charge forward
So as to rend the deep water,
So as to crumble the shining stone.
For him I will charge forward
So as to split the blue stone
In the place which I am told to reach,
So as to crush the black stone
At the time when I am told to attack.'

Činggis Qa'an said, 'A man who used to be an enemy, when it comes to his *former* killings and hostile actions "conceals his person and hides his tongue" – he is afraid. As for this one, however, he does not hide his killings and hostile actions; on the contrary, he makes them known. He is a man to have as a companion. He is named Ĵirqo'adai, but because he shot an arrow at the neckbone of my tawny war horse with the white mouth, I shall call him Ĵebe¹ and I will use him as my *Ĵebe* arrow.' He named him Ĵebe and said, 'Keep by my side!'

This is the way in which Ĵebe came from the Tayiči'ut and became a companion of Činggis Qa'an.

¹ *Ĵebe* means 'weapon', but it also designated a particular type of arrow.

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS

CHAPTER FIVE

148 When, on that occasion, Činggis Qa'an plundered the Tayiči'ut, he wiped out the men of Tayiči'ut lineage, such as the Tayiči'ut A'uču Ba'atur, Qoton Örceng¹ and Qudu'udar – he blew them to *the winds* like *hearth-ashes*, even to the offspring of their offspring. Činggis Qa'an carried away the people of their tribe, and spent the winter at Quba Qaya.²

149 Old Širgü'etü of the Ničügüt Ba'arin *tribe*, together with his sons Alaq and Naya'a, seized Tarqutai Kiriltuq, chief of the Tayiči'ut, who was *hiding* in the woods, because he was a mortal enemy of Činggis Qa'an. As Tarqutai could not mount a horse,³ they made him ride in a cart.

As Old Širgü'etü and his sons Alaq and Naya'a were proceeding *thus*, holding *down* Tarqutai Kiriltuq, the sons and younger brothers of Tarqutai Kiriltuq said, 'Let us take him away *from them!*' They approached and overtook them. When his⁴ sons and younger brothers caught up, Old Širgü'etü got onto the cart and, sitting astride Tarqutai, who was lying on his back and unable to stand up, drew a knife and said, 'Your sons and younger brothers have come to take you away. Even if I do not kill you, telling *myself* that I am laying hands on my lord,⁵ they will surely kill me saying that I did lay hands on my lord. And if I do kill you, I shall of course be killed all the same. So, at the very moment I die, I shall die taking *you as my death-companion.*'⁶

¹ The Qodun Örceng of § 141 above.

² I.e., 'Reddish Rock' (tu.)

³ Because of his corpulence. The epithet Tarqutai means 'Fat.'

⁴ I.e., Tarqutai's.

⁵ Lit., 'gan.'

⁶ Lit., 'pillow.' See the Commentary.

Thus saying he straddled him and was about to cut his throat with his big knife, when Tarqutai Kiriltuq, calling loudly to his younger brothers and sons, said, 'Širgü'etü is killing me. Once he has killed me, what will you achieve by taking away my dead and lifeless body? Draw back at once before he kills me! Temüjin will not kill me. When Temüjin was still little, because

He had fire in his eyes,

He had a light in his face,

and because he had been abandoned in a camp without a master,¹ I went *there* to get him and brought him *back home with me:*

Saying that if I taught him

He would be likely to learn,

I kept teaching and instructing him just as if

He was a two or three-year-old new colt

I had been training.²

Had I wanted to make him die,

Would I not have been able to kill him?

They say that at present

He is becoming thoughtful *in his actions*,

That his mind is clear.³

Temüjin will not cause me to die. You, my sons and younger brothers, quickly turn back at once lest Širgü'etü kills me.' So he cried out loudly.

Tarqutai's sons and younger brothers conferred among themselves: 'We came to save father's life. Once Širgü'etü has deprived him of his life, what can we do with his empty, lifeless body? Better to turn back at once before he kills him!' So saying, back they turned. Alaq and Naya'a, the sons of Old Širgü'etü who had withdrawn on their arrival,⁴

¹ Because his father Yisügei Ba'atur was dead at the time.

² This is Tarqutai's justification of the episode told in § 79ff.

³ Lit., 'opening.'

⁴ I.e., when Tarqutai's sons and brothers had come up and overtaken them.

now returned. Širgü'etü, having waited for them to come back, moved on *together with his sons*.

As they proceeded on their way, on reaching the Qutuqul Bend¹ Naya'a then said, 'If we arrive holding this Tarqutai *captive*, Činggis Qa'an will say *of us* that we came having laid hands on our rightful lord. Činggis Qa'an will say of us, "How trustworthy a people are these who come having laid hands on their rightful lord? How can they still be companions to us? They are people who are not *worthy of companionship*. People who lay hands on their rightful lord must be cut down!" Shall we *not* be cut down? Better to free Tarqutai and send him away from here, and go to Činggis Qa'an saying, "We, possessing only our bodies, have come to offer our services to Činggis Qa'an." We shall say, "We had seized Tarqutai and were on our way *here*, but we could not do away with our rightful lord. Saying *to ourselves*, 'How can we make him die before our *very eyes?*', we freed him and sent him away, and we have come respectfully to offer our services."'

So he spoke and the father and sons, having approved these words of Naya'a, set Tarqutai Kiriltuq free and sent him away from Quduqul Bend.

When this same Old Širgü'etü arrived with his sons Alaq and Naya'a, Činggis Qa'an asked why they had come. Old Širgü'etü told Činggis Qa'an, 'We seized Tarqutai Kiriltuq and were on our way *here*, but then saying *to ourselves*, "How can we make our rightful lord die before our *very eyes?*", we could not do away with him. We set him free and sent him off, and came to Činggis Qa'an to offer our services.'

At that, Činggis Qa'an said, 'If you had come having laid hands on your lord Tarqutai, you and your offspring would have been cut down as people who had laid hands on their rightful lord. Your thought that you could not do away

¹ Qutuqul = Quduqul below. See the Commentary.

with your rightful lord is correct.' So saying, he showed favour to Naya'a.

150 After that, when Činggis Qa'an was at Dersüt,¹ Jaqa Gambu of the Kereyit came to join him as a companion.² When he arrived, the Merkit were approaching to fight. Činggis Qa'an, Jaqa Gambu and other *chiefs* engaged them and drove them back. Then, *Jaqa Gambu* made the Tümen Tübege and the Olon Dongqayit, *two* scattered tribes of the Kereyit, also come and submit to Činggis Qa'an.

As for Ong Qa'an³ of the Kereyit, previously – in the time of Yisügei Qa'an³ – because they were living together very harmoniously, he and Yisügei Qan had declared themselves sworn friends.

The manner in which they had declared themselves sworn friends *was as follows*:

Because Ong Qan had killed the younger brothers of his father Qurčaqus Buyıruq Qan, he had become a rebel towards his paternal uncle Gür Qan and was forced to sneak away through the Qara'un Gorge⁴ *to escape from him*. With *only* a hundred men he got out *of the gorge* and joined⁵ Yisügei Qan. Prompted by his coming to him, Yisügei Qan moved his own army into the field and, driving Gür Qan toward Qašin, he took Ong Qan's people and returned them to him. This is why they became sworn friends.

151 After that, when Ong Qan's younger brother Erke Qara was *about* to be killed by his elder brother Ong Qan, he escaped and submitted to Inanča Qan of the Naiman. Inanča Qan dispatched his troops, but Ong Qan in his wanderings had *already* passed three cities and had made his way to

¹ = Dersüt? The text has Tersüt. See the Commentary.

² I.e., as a *nökör*.

³ For Qa'an read Qan. See the Commentary.

⁴ Lit., 'Dark Gorge.'

⁵ Lit., 'came to.'

the *gür qan* of the Qara Kidat.¹ From there, having rebelled against the *gür qan*, he passed through the cities of the Uyiquit and the Tangqut.² He fed himself *on the way* by milking five goats, muzzling *their kids*,³ and by bleeding his camel.

While in *these* straits, he came to Lake Güse'ür. Činggis Qa'an, on account of Ong Qan and Yisügei Qan having formerly declared themselves sworn friends, sent to him as envoys Taqai Ba'atur and Sükegei Je'ün; *then*, from the source of the Kelüren River, Činggis Qa'an went in person to meet him. Because Ong Qan had arrived starved and exhausted, Činggis Qa'an raised taxes for him, brought him into the camp and took care of him.

That winter, in an orderly way they moved to *new pastures* and Činggis Qa'an wintered at Quba Qaya.

152 Then Ong Qan's younger brothers and the chiefs said among themselves,

'Our elder brother the Qan
Has a miserable nature; he goes on
Harbouring a rotten liver.⁴

He has destroyed his brothers and has even submitted to the Qara Kidat — and he makes his people suffer. Now, what shall we do with him? To speak of his early days, when he was seven years old the Merkit carried him off; they gave him a kidskin coat with black spots to wear, and in the Bu'ura Steppe by the Selengge River he pounded *grain* in a Merkit's mortar. But his father Qurčaqus Buyuruq Qan raided the Merkit and there and then rescued his son. And again, when he was thirteen years old, Aĵai Qan of the Tatar carried him off together with his mother. When *Aĵai Qan*

¹ ~ Qara Kitat. Cf. below, §§ 248 and 266.

² ~ Ui'ut and Tang'ut, i.e. the Uighurs and the Tanguts. Cf. below, § 152.

³ In order to prevent them from suckling the she-goat too often. See the Commentary.

⁴ I.e., he has a foul character.

made him look after his camels, he took with him a shepherd of Aĵai Qan and fled back home. After that, he fled again for fear of the Naiman and went to the *gür qan* of the Qara Kidat on the Čui River, in the country of the Sarta'ul. Then, in less than a year, he rebelled and left once more. He skirted the country of the Ui'ut and the Tang'ut.¹ Reduced to straits as he went on, he fed himself by milking five goats, muzzling *their kids*, and by bleeding his camel. He had only a blind yellowish-white horse with a black tail and mane. Being in *these* straits, he came to his son Temüĵin, who raised taxes and indeed took care of him. Now, forgetting that he kept himself alive like this thanks to his son Temüĵin, he goes on harbouring a rotten liver.² What shall we do *with him*?³

So they said among themselves, and their words were reported by Altun Aşuq to Ong Qan. Altun Aşuq said, 'I too did take part in this scheme, but I could not do away with you, my Qan.' Then Ong Qan had his younger brothers and chiefs arrested: El Qutur, Qulbari, Alin Taiši and the others who had thus conspired. From *among* his younger brothers, *only* Ĵaqa Gambu escaped and submitted to the Naiman.

Ong Qan had them brought in fetters into his tent and said to them, 'What did we pledge to each other when we passed by the country of the Ui'ut and the Tang'ut? How could I think like you?'⁴ So saying, spitting in their faces, he had them freed from their fetters. After they had been spat on by the Qan *himself*, the people who were in the tent all rose and spat on them.

¹ See above, § 151 and n. 2.

² I.e., an evil mind (= evil intentions).

³ A rhetorical question implying that they should kill him, as evident from what follows.

⁴ I.e., 'I could never think of you as you did with regard to me!' — implying that, were that so, he would execute them.

153 After having spent that winter (1201-1202) at *Quba Qaya*, in the autumn of the Year of the Dog (1202), Činggis Qa'an engaged these Tatars in battle at Dalan Nemürges:¹ the Ča'a'an Tatar,² Alči Tatar, Duta'ut [Tatar] and Aruqai Tatar. Before fighting, Činggis Qa'an jointly³ issued the following decree: 'If we overcome the enemy, we shall not stop for booty. When the victory is complete, that booty will surely be ours, and we will share it among ourselves. If we are forced by the enemy to retreat, let us turn back to the point where we began the attack. Those men who do not turn back to the point where we began the attack shall be cut down!' So he decreed with them.

They fought at Dalan Nemürges and drove off the Tatars. After they had overcome them, they forced them to rejoin their⁴ tribe on the Ulqui Šilügeljit River and thoroughly plundered them. There and then they destroyed these important people: the Ča'ān Tatar,⁵ Alči Tatar, Duta'ut Tatar and Aruqai Tatar.

As for the words of the decree that had been jointly issued, since Altan, Qučar and Dāritai – all three – had not complied with them and had stopped for booty, Činggis Qa'an, saying that they had not complied with these words, sent Ĵebe and Qubilai to take away from them the herds of horses and the goods they had acquired as booty – everything they had seized.

154 Having destroyed and thoroughly plundered the Tatars, Činggis Qa'an held a great council with his kinsmen in a single tent to decide what to do with the Tatar tribesmen. Together they decided as follows:

¹ I.e., 'Seventy Felt Cloaks.'

² = Čaqān Tatar. See the Commentary.

³ I.e., in concert with the other army commanders, such as Altan, Qučar and Dāritai.

⁴ I.e., the Tatar.

⁵ = Čaqān Tatar. See the Commentary.

'From olden days the Tatar people
Have destroyed our fathers and forefathers;
To avenge our fathers and forefathers,
And requite the wrong, for them
We shall measure the Tatars against the linchpin
of a cart,
And kill them to the last one,
We shall utterly slay them.¹
The rest we shall enslave:
Some here, some there, dividing them among
ourselves!'

The council being concluded, as they emerged from the tent, the Tatar Yeke Čeren asked Belgütei what decision they had made. Belgütei said, 'We have decided to measure you all against the linchpin of a cart and slay you.'

At these words of Belgütei, Yeke Čeren issued a proclamation to his Tatars, and they raised a barricade. As our soldiers tried to surround and attack the Tatars that had barricaded themselves in, they suffered great losses. After much trouble, when they forced the barricaded Tatars into submission and were about to slay them to the last man by measuring them against the linchpin of a cart, the Tatars said among themselves, 'Let everyone put a knife in his sleeve and let us die each taking an enemy with us as a death-companion!'² And again we suffered great losses. In this way the Tatars were finally measured against the linchpin of a cart and exterminated.

Then Činggis Qa'an issued this order: 'Because Belgütei divulged the decision we took together with our kinsmen at the great council, our soldiers suffered great losses. From now on Belgütei shall not join us in great councils; until the council ends, he shall handle those who are outside and, having dealt with them, he shall judge

¹ Only those taller than the linchpin would be killed.

² See above, § 149.

litigations and those guilty of theft and falsehood.¹ When the council is over and after we have drunk the ceremonial wine, *only* then shall Belgütei and Da'arитай² join us!' So he ordered.

155 Then, on that occasion, Činggis Qa'an took *as wife* Yisügen Qatun, daughter of the Tatar Yeke Čeren. Being loved by him, Yisügen Qatun said, 'If it pleases the Qa'an, he will take care of me, regarding me as a human being and a person *worth keeping*.³ But my elder sister, who is called Yisüi, is superior to me: she *is more* suitable for a ruler. Recently, a bridegroom for her was taken *into our family* as a son-in-law. I wonder now where she has gone in *all* this confusion.'

On these words Činggis Qa'an said, 'If your elder sister is better than you, let us make a search for her! But if your elder sister comes *to hand*, will you yield *your place* to her?' Yisügen Qatun said, 'If it pleases the Qa'an, as soon as I see my elder sister I shall yield to her.'

On this promise, Činggis Qa'an issued the order and had a search made. Our soldiers came across her as she was going into a wood together with the bridegroom to whom she had been given. Her husband fled. They then brought back Yisüi Qatun.

When Yisügen Qatun saw her elder sister, keeping the promise she had made earlier, she rose and let her sit in the place she had occupied. She herself took a lower seat.

Since she turned out to be as Yisügen Qatun had said, Činggis Qa'an was pleased with her; he married Yisüi Qatun and placed her in the rank *of his principal wives*.

156 After having completely ravaged the Tatars, one day Činggis Qa'an sat outside drinking in company. He was sitting between both Yisüi Qatun and Yisügen Qatun, and

¹ See the Commentary.

² I.e., Dāritai.

³ I.e., not as something to use and discard.

was drinking with them, when Yisüi Qatun heaved a deep sigh. Then Činggis Qa'an, having thought it over, summoned Bo'orču, Muqali and other chiefs, and said, 'You¹ make all these people who have been assembled *here* – and no others – stand in groups of related families, and separate from the rest any man in a group which is not his own.' So he ordered.

As *the people* were standing thus in groups of related families, a handsome and alert young man stood apart from *all* the groups.² When they said, 'To which clan do you belong?', that man said, 'I am the bridegroom to whom was given the daughter of the Tatar Yeke Čeren called Yisüi. When we were plundered by the enemy, I took fright and fled. I came *hither* because things seemed to have settled down now and I kept telling myself, "How can I be recognized among *so many people*?"'

When these words were reported to Činggis Qa'an, he ordered: 'All the same, he has been living as an outcast, with hostile intentions; what has he come to spy upon now? Those like him we have measured against the linchpin of a cart *and exterminated*. Why hesitate? Cast him out of my sight!' He was cut down immediately.

157 When, in that same Year of the Dog (1202), Činggis Qa'an rode against the Tatars, Ong Qan rode against the Merkit. Pursuing Toqto'a Beki in the direction of the Barqujin Lowland, *Ong Qan* killed Tögüs Beki, the eldest son of Toqto'a, seized Toqto'a's two daughters Qutuqtai and Ča'alun and his wives,³ and plundered his two sons Qutu and Čila'un together with their people, but *of all the booty* he gave not one thing to Činggis Qa'an.

¹ I.e., 'You Bo'orču, Muqali and the other chiefs.'

² Because he was a Tatar, and all the adult male Tatar prisoners had been killed (§ 154).

³ The text has Ča'arun for Ča'alun. One should, perhaps, read: 'seized Toqto'a's two wives Qutuqtai and Ča'alun.' See the Commentary.

158 After that, Činggis Qa'an and Ong Qan rode against Buyirūq Qan of the Gūčūgūt *clan* of the Naiman. They reached Soqoq Usun¹ by the Uluq Taq² where *Buyirūq Qan* was staying *at the time*.

Unable to engage in combat, Buyirūq Qan went off, crossing the Altai *Mountains*. They pursued Buyirūq Qan from Soqoq Usun and, forcing him to cross the Altai, they chased him along the Ürünggü *River* downstream at Qum Šinggir.³

While this was going on, a chief called Yedi Tubluq, who was patrolling *for Buyirūq Qan*, was pursued by our patrol. As he was about to flee up the mountain *side*, his saddle-strap broke and he was captured on the spot. Pursuing Buyirūq Qan down along the Ürünggü *River*, they overtook him at Lake Kišil Baš,⁴ and there they finished him off.

159 As Činggis Qa'an and Ong Qan were returning from that place, the *great* warrior Kōkse'ü Sabraq of the Naiman arrayed his troops at the Bayidaraq Confluence and prepared to fight them. Činggis Qa'an and Ong Qan *likewise* decided to fight and arrayed their troops; *however*, when they arrived it was *already* getting late. They said, 'We shall fight in the morning!', and passed the night in *battle* order. Then Ong Qan had fires lit in the place where he was stationed and that same night moved upstream along the Qara Se'ül⁵ *River*.

160 Ĵamuqa then moved on together with Ong Qan and, as they went, Ĵamuqa said to Ong Qan, 'My sworn friend Temüjin for a long time has been sending envoys to the Naiman, and now he has not come *with us*.

Qan, Qan, I am the skylark
That stays *in one place*;

¹ I.e., 'Soqoq Water (= River).'

² A mountain already mentioned in § 144 above. Cf. below, § 177.

³ Lit., 'of Qum Šinggir (tu. "Sand Promontory").'

⁴ I.e., 'Red Head' (tu.).

⁵ I.e., 'Black Tail.'

My sworn friend is
The migratory lark.

He must have gone *over* to the Naiman and has remained behind with the intention of submitting to them.'

At these words of Ĵamuqa, Gūrin Ba'atur of the Ubčiq¹ said, 'How can you speak so deceitfully, backbiting and slandering your upright brother?'²

161 Činggis Qa'an had spent the night at that same place. Early next morning, at daybreak, he wanted to fight, but when he looked across to Ong Qan's position, he found that he was no longer *there*. Saying, 'They certainly treat us like burnt offerings *at the sacrifice for the dead*,'³ Činggis Qa'an *also* moved out from there. He crossed *the river* at the Eder Altai Confluence and, being on the move, proceeded further, setting up camp in the Sa'ari Steppe.

Thereafter, Činggis Qa'an and Qasar, having realised the difficulties of the Naiman, no longer counted them as people *to be reckoned with*.

162 Kōkse'ü Sabraq went in pursuit of Ong Qan. He captured the wife of *his son* Senggūm together with *all* his people. He captured *also* half the people and livestock of Ong Qan which were at Telegetü Pass,⁴ and returned home.

At the time of that engagement, Qutu and Čila'un, the two sons of Toqto'a of the Merkit who were *also* there, separated from *Ong Qan* and, taking their own people with them, moved downstream along the Selengge *River* to join their father.

163 After being pillaged by Kōkse'ü Sabraq,⁵ Ong Qan sent an envoy to Činggis Qa'an. Through the envoy he sent this

¹ The text has Ubčiqtai, but this is probably a mistake for Übčiritei. See the Commentary.

² Here 'brother' = 'cousin.'

³ I.e., like something that is no longer useful and can be discarded.

⁴ The Telētü Pass of § 136 above.

⁵ = Kōkse'ü Sabraq.

message: 'I have been robbed by the Naiman of my people and my wife. I send *this envoy* to request from you, my son, your "four steeds."¹ Let them rescue my people for me!

Činggis Qa'an then sent Bo'orču, Muqali, Boroqu² and Čila'un Ba'atur, these 'four steeds' of his, and arrayed his troops. Before the 'four steeds' arrived, Senggüm had just joined battle with *Kökse'ü Sabraq* at Hula'an Qut;³ his horse had been shot in the thigh by an arrow and he *himself* was about to be captured.

At that moment those 'four steeds' arrived and saved him, and they recovered his people and his wife for him – all of them. Ong Qan then said, 'Formerly his good father⁴ had saved my people who had been lost like this; now, once more, his son, by sending his "four steeds", has rescued my lost people for me. As to my repaying *these* favours, let *only* the protection⁵ of Heaven and Earth decide *how, and in what measure!*'

164 Ong Qan said further, 'My sworn friend Yisügei Ba'atur once rescued my lost people for me; *his* son Temüjin has again rescued for me my people who had gone away. When these two, father and son, gathered the lost people and returned them to me, for whose sake did they take the trouble of gathering and returning them? As for myself, now

I have grown old, and having grown old,
When I shall ascend to the heights –
I have grown ancient, and having grown ancient,
When I shall ascend to the cliffs –
Who will govern all my people?

¹ I.e., the 'four stalwarts.' See the Commentary.

² = Boro'ul. See above, § 137.

³ I.e., 'Red Cliffs.'

⁴ I.e., Činggis Qan's late father.

⁵ I.e., the protecting powers.

My younger brothers lack *force of* character; there is only Senggüm, my one son, but it is as if he did not exist. If I make *my* son Temüjin the elder brother of Senggüm, I shall have two sons and my mind will be at rest.' Having said *this*, Ong Qan and Činggis Qa'an met together in the Black Forest by the Tu'ula River and declared themselves father and son. The reason why they declared themselves father and son was because in early days Ong Qan had declared himself a sworn friend of Činggis Qa'an's father Yisügei Qan, and *by virtue of this fact Činggis Qa'an* said that *Ong Qan was* like a father to him. Such was the reason why they declared themselves father and son.¹ They made *the following* promises to each other:

'When we attack the enemy hosts,
We shall attack together as one;
When we chase the cunning wild beasts,
We shall also chase them together as one!'

So they declared. Činggis Qa'an and Ong Qan also promised each other, saying, 'Out of jealousy for us two –

Should a snake with *venomous* teeth
Provoke discord *between us*,
Let us not succumb to his provocations.
By talking *only* mouth to mouth²
We shall believe *each other!*
Should a snake with *venomous* fangs
Spread slander about us,
Let us not accept his slander.
By explaining *only* face to face³
We shall believe *each other!*'

And, pledging their word, they lived together in mutual affection.

¹ See above, § 96.

² Lit., 'by teeth and mouth.'

³ Lit., 'by mouth and tongue.'