

THE PERCEPTION OF CHINGGIS KHAN:  
A COMPARISON OF MEDIEVAL MONGOLIAN, PERSIAN,  
AND CHINESE HISTORICAL SOURCES



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## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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## ABSTRACT

### The Perception of Chinggis Khan:

#### A Comparison of Medieval Mongolian, Persian, and Chinese Historical Sources

This study aims to present a comprehensive understanding of Chinggis Khan's life, career, and policies by comparing his perception via evaluating the fair and harsh policies of Chinggis Khan in major primary sources in its Inner Asian context and conception of political legitimacy. Accordingly, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, *Jami' al-Tawarikh* and *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* examined and concluded that they have similar perceptions about Chinggis Khan, but their approach to the events differs. In this respect, to reconcile these differences, the compilers emphasize Chinggis Khan's good deeds and legitimize or censor things they attribute negatively in accordance with the conditions of the sovereignty of the Mongols, Persia, and China during the compilation process of these sources.

## ÖZET

### Cengiz Han Algısı:

#### Orta Çağ Moğol, Fars ve Çin Kaynaklarının Karşılaştırması

Bu çalışma, birincil kaynaklardaki adil ve sert politikalarını inceleyip İç Asya tarihi ve politik meşruiyet bağlamında değerlendirerek, Cengiz Han'ın hayatı, kariyeri ve politikaları hakkında kapsamlı bir anlayış sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, *Moğolların Gizli Tarihi*, *Cami'üt-Tevarih* ve *Yuan Yıllıkları*'nın ilk bölümü incelenmiş ve Cengiz Han hakkında benzer algılara sahip oldukları, ancak olaylara yaklaşımlarının farklı olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Dolayısıyla bu farklılıkları uzlaştırmak isteyen yazarlar, kendi egemenlik anlayışlarına uygun olarak Cengiz Han'ın iyi işlerine vurgu yapmakta ve olumsuz atfettikleri şeyleri meşrulaştırmakta veya sansürlemektedir.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The Mongol and Chinggis Khan studies, which have significant importance in the history of Asia and the world, have increased over the recent years due to access to primary sources in different languages (Appendix A). Whereas most of these studies have a descriptive approach and deal with the military, administrative and economic aspects of Chinggis Khan and the Mongol Empire, there are also dynamic studies such as family, society, religion, and philosophy. For instance, T. May, one of the leading names on Chinggis Khan and Mongol studies, explains how Chinggis Khan achieved success as a leader and build a world empire by creating an iron and disciplined military organization from tribal nomads of the Mongols. Contrarily, R. W. Dunnell, a specialist on Chinese, Inner-Asian, and Mongol studies elaborated on Chinggis Khan's life and legacy by presenting the nomadic culture, political environment, and geographical and social environment of the Mongols. Additionally, M. Biran shows the constructive influence and legacy of Chinggis Khan upon the Muslim world in conjunction with his positive and negative impacts on the history of the world.

Due to the decline of studies in German and French and the increase of Chinese and Japanese studies, new fields of study emerged,<sup>1</sup> and subsequently, the perception of Chinggis Khan was affected and changed over time. Until the 20th century, Chinggis Khan and the Mongols carried a negative image, portrayed as destructive, disastrous, and uncivilized barbarians by Ming China, then Russia, and

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<sup>1</sup> Sinor, Denis, "Reflections on the History and Historiography of the Nomad Empires of Central Eurasia," 4.

other western countries, in addition to the negative influence of the sources from the Islamic world that had affected the perceptions of historians. Chinggis Khan gained a positive image and was portrayed as a world conqueror that united the Inner Asian people after the emergence of the new Mongol studies in the middle of the 20th century. These studies included translations of the works of scholars who worked under the Mongolian rule, such as Juwayni and Rashid al-Din.

According to I. Togan, these changes started with The General Congress of National Minorities in 1962, when Chinese scholars attributed Chinggis Khan's empire as a force that unites divergent people.<sup>2</sup> Afterward, Russian and other western scholars published articles and papers on Chinggis Khan and his positive image.<sup>3</sup> Today, however, there are still various sources regarding the perception of Chinggis Khan and the effects of the state he founded on the people of Inner Asia and world history remain. Therefore, I started to wonder about his perception in the major primary sources and was encouraged to write this thesis.

### 1.1 The historical background

M. Biran states that nomadic empires were prevalent political systems and generally emerged<sup>4</sup> in times of crisis.<sup>5</sup> After increasing his power via his fair and harsh policies and attracting many followers from various regions, Chinggis Khan became what the nomads desired for a long time, a leader who would unite them and end the disorder

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<sup>2</sup> Togan, İsenbike, "Chinggis Khan and the Mongols," 769.

<sup>3</sup> Such as S. Gumilev, P. Jackson, P. Rachenevsky, I. de Rachewiltz, M. Biran, D. Morgan, T. Allsen, J. Weatherford.

<sup>4</sup> There are so many opinions on the emergence of the nomadic empires that it would not be possible to examine all of them in this thesis. For further studies see Biran, M. (2004); Di Cosmo, N. (1994); Rogers, J. D. (2012); Biran, M. (2007). *Chinggis Khan: Makers of the Muslim World*, 12-14.

<sup>5</sup> Biran, Michal, *Chinggis Khan: Makers of the Muslim World*, 11.

in the region. However, it was not easy to gather people under one single rule<sup>6</sup> and ensure their loyalty to him or his descendants, as there were no regulations regarding ancestral succession. Therefore, he needed to build a stable administration system that act in accordance to the laws he introduced as he conquered new lands. To build an empire, one needs to understand the civil culture that necessitated the support of educated people and the adaptation of elements from higher cultures of institutionalized entities.<sup>7</sup> As he possessed the military skills to conquer vast lands and the intelligence to rule people from diverse backgrounds by encompassing their differences, he became stronger over time and succeeded in establishing a nomadic empire.

Chinggis Khan was born in Mongolia and faced many difficulties from his childhood, but he managed to establish a world empire across Eurasia in the 13th century. He gained followers from various nations and different levels of society due to his generous character and fair policies. Furthermore, he attained the respect and commitment of people by giving importance to merit regardless of any differences in social status and ethnic background, and would place talented individuals in strategic positions. He built and reshaped administrative structures and ensured the safety of the people and their goods in the lands he conquered. This led to cross-cultural exchanges across Eurasia.

Conversely, although Chinggis Khan is known for his fairness, he has also been known for taking drastic measures, which is a common policy for the rulers in the steppe in the 12th-13th century. He was harsh towards enemies, rivals, disloyal people, and those who sabotaged his plans. As one of the most influential characters

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<sup>6</sup> Di Cosmo, Nicola, "Ancient Inner Asian Nomads: Their Economic Basis and Its Significance in Chinese History," 68.

<sup>7</sup> Saunders, John Joseph, "The Nomad as Empire Builder: A Comparison of the Arab and Mongol Conquests," 102.

in the history of medieval times, having a comprehensive understanding of his personality and the reasons behind his behavior is crucial in forming a critical analysis of his achievements. In this context, this thesis will attempt to present his life and policies by answering the following questions: How can we reconcile his fairness with the notion of harsh measures? How are these two traits reconciled in the sources? Is there a difference between Mongolian, Persian, and Chinese source material?

## 1.2 Conceptual framework

Political legitimacy is coloring the initial thoughts of this thesis on fairness and harsh policies of Chinggis Khan in medieval primary sources. As our sources were written at different times, geographies, cultures, and historiographic styles with various concerns, it makes one wonder the conditions of the sovereignty of the Mongols, China, and Persia during the compilation process of these sources. Since legitimacy and justification are prevailing and constantly debated issues by political philosophers and other scholars,<sup>8</sup> I cannot examine the entire concept in this thesis and only state the conditions of the sovereignty of societies who compiled our major primary sources.

As mentioned in our primary sources, *yosun* (customary law in Mongolian) and the mandate of Heaven are the fundamental principles that provide legitimacy to the ruler of the Mongols. The Mongols used *törü* (laws binding state and society for

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<sup>8</sup> For issues of legitimacy for dynasties of non-origin see Chan, Hok-Lam. (1984). *Legitimation in Imperial China: Discussion under the Jurchen-Chin Dynasty (1115-1234)*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

ancient Turks)<sup>9</sup> in the political category to legitimize their supreme power beside the will of Heaven (*qut* for ancient Turks).<sup>10</sup> This differed from *yasa*, laws created by the rulers. Chinggis Khan could interpret *törü* and could change the legal principles as he wished due to the ambiguity of the rules of *törü* at that time.<sup>11</sup> Thus, he omitted the council of the elders, a tradition in *törü* of ancient Turks, and became the only decisionmaker of the Mongol Empire, although he often listened to the advice of his people in *quriltai* (General Assembly). He used *törü* to expand his influence over the Mongols, the Turks, and other nomads of Inner Asia with the blessing of Heaven.

When we look at Persia, customary law and Islamic law are the two major principles that give legitimacy to the rulers. The Ilkhanids used Chinggisid lineage and local traditions of legitimacy to rule Persia as a conquering state.<sup>12</sup> Struggling for the dominance of these lands, Ilkhanids needed to prove the legitimacy of the state they founded to both external rivals, especially Jochids, and local people. During the ongoing khanates conflicts in Mongolia, Hülegü took advantage of this situation and built Ilkhanids in Persia.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, the internal and external struggles for political legitimacy continued for a long time. When Ghazan Khan converted to Islam, he attempted to establish an administration in accordance with the traditions of the local people and ordered the compilation of *Jami' al-tawarikh* to prove his legitimacy in the region. In this regard, the Ilkhanid rulers and their ancestor Chinggis Khan were depicted as just, generous, and kind rulers who protect the Muslims and have the blessing of the Creator throughout *Jami' al-tawarikh*.

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<sup>9</sup> For *törü* see Şirin, Hatice. (2016). *Eski Türk Yazıtları Söz Varlığı İncelemesi*, Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları. p. 743. Also see Clauson, Sir Gerard. (1972). *An Ethymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 531-532.

<sup>10</sup> Pochekaev, Roman Yu, "Törü: Ancient Turkic Law "Privatized" by Chinggis Khan and His Descendants," 182.

<sup>11</sup> Pochekaev, Roman Yu, "Törü: Ancient Turkic Law "Privatized" by Chinggis Khan and His Descendants," 185.

<sup>12</sup> Chen, Yuan, "Legitimation Discourse and the Theory of the Five Elements in Imperial China," 356.

<sup>13</sup> Jackson, Peter, "The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire," 235.

In the case of China, a rising regime ruled by a virtuous emperor who has the mandate of Heaven is an essential principle for political legitimacy.<sup>14</sup> However, as a non-Han Chinese dynasty, the Yuan Dynasty struggled to build its legitimacy as a conquering alien state. Choosing a dynastic element and writing the official history of the previous dynasty are the fundamental principles to build political legitimacy in Chinese territory,<sup>15</sup> as both implies appointing a predecessor Chinese dynasty to establish their succession. Nonetheless, according to *Yuan Shi*, which was compiled during the Ming Dynasty, the Yuan Dynasty did not choose a dynastic element but compiled the official history of the Liao, Jin, and Song Dynasties, probably not to offend their multicultural subjects.<sup>16</sup> After the Yuan Dynasty collapsed, the Ming Dynasty compiled *Yuan Shi* with the same concerns as their predecessor, to build their legitimacy as a newly founded dynasty.

### 1.3 Definitions

As our sources present Chinggis Khan's character and policies with various adjectives, usually through events rather than stating it openly, I have divided his policies into two, fairness and harsh measures. By fair policies, I mean treating everyone in the same way without favoritism. In this context, I have gathered all the passages that fit this description under this title, such as his unprejudiced character, openness to listening to others, forgiving nature, and protecting his people and state from whoever threatens them.

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<sup>14</sup> Chen, Yuan, "Legitimation Discourse and the Theory of the Five Elements in Imperial China," 325.

<sup>15</sup> Chen, Yuan, "Legitimation Discourse and the Theory of the Five Elements in Imperial China," 359.

<sup>16</sup> Chen, Yuan, "Legitimation Discourse and the Theory of the Five Elements in Imperial China," 356.

In contrast, by harsh measures, I mean his unpleasant policies that seem unkind in our sources. Therefore, I have gathered all the related passages, such as his scary and stubborn character or vengeful and draconian policies. Since the terms fairness and harsh measures cover other characteristics of Chinggis Khan mentioned earlier, I decided to use these terms while examining the perception of Chinggis Khan in major primary sources and presenting similarities and differences between them.

This study aims to present a comprehensive understanding of Chinggis Khan's life, career, and policies as a ruler of a world empire by comparing the perception of him in *The Secret History of the Mongols*, *Jami' al-tawarikh*, and *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* as they are the major primary sources on Chinggis Khan and the Mongols. By doing so, I revealed his fair and harsh policies in the sources his descendants compiled and, compared their similar or different traits on Chinggis Khan.

#### 1.4 Sources and methodology

Chinggis Khan managed to build a world empire out of scattered tribes of the Mongolian steppe, and affected the history of the world by conquering vast lands and expanding the intercultural exchange in Eurasia. In this aspect, after presenting the life and perception of Chinggis Khan, this study then evaluates, according to these sources, how his fair and harsh policies affected his life and the emergence of the Mongol Empire from three angles. Where or to whom did his fairness and harsh measures directed to? What was the impact of these policies on Chinggis Khan as a

rising power? What kind of image does Chinggis Khan have in medieval Mongolian, Persian, and Chinese historical sources?

I chose these sources because each of them has its characteristics. Firstly, *The Secret History* is the earliest source of the history of the Mongols. It gives personal information about Chinggis Khan and tells the history of the Mongols from the Mongolian point of view. Our second source, *Jami' al-tawarikh*, was written by using contemporaneous sources and provides information about the genealogy of the ruling dynasty. Finally, *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* was written by using court records of the Yuan dynasty during the Ming dynasty. The compilers did not review it upon finishing it in a short period. Nonetheless, it was written using many valuable sources that did not survive to the present day and provided the opportunity to compare the events with Persian and Mongolian sources to attain reliable information regarding the Mongols.

There are few written Mongolian sources from the 12th-13th centuries since the Mongols had a tradition of oral history. *The Secret History of the Mongols* was written by an anonymous author(s) on an unknown date. We merely know that it was written in the year of the Rat when a Great Assembly convened, which could be referred to every twelve years following 1228. The author(s) is probably someone who had close relations with the ruling clan, as *The Secret History* gives insightful information about the Mongol royal family. Since the only surviving written version of this source is the transliteration of Chinese characters, it is considered both a Mongolian and Chinese source as a whole. It was translated by F. W. Cleaves in 1982, by Igor de Rachewiltz in 2004, by U. Onon in 1990, and later in 2001. In addition, P. Kahn published an adaptation of F. Cleaves' translation in 1998. In this

thesis, I used the translation of I. de Rachewiltz and U. Onon to compare the perception of Chinggis Khan with *Jami' al-tawarikh* and *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*.

We have two significant Persian court historians who presented the conquests of Chinggis Khan, the history of the Mongol Empire, and their presence in Persian lands. Firstly, Ata-Malik Juwayni (1226-1283) wrote *The History of the World Conqueror* in 650-658/1252-1260. It provides valuable information about the Mongol Empire and the campaigns of Chinggis Khan by polishing their virtues and censoring his negative attitudes. Secondly, Rashid al-Din (1247-1318) wrote *Jami' al-tawarikh* at the behest of Ghazan Khan and Öljeitü, rulers of the Ilkhanid Dynasty, in 1300-1310. It is widely regarded as the first world history and was translated into English by W. M. Thackston in 1998. This study examines and compares *Jami' al-tawarikh*, as it already contains information from *The History of the World Conqueror*, with *The Secret History* and *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*.

*The History of Yuan (Yuan Shi 元史)* and *The Campaigns of Chinggis Khan (shengwu qing zheng lu 聖武親征錄)* are the most comprehensive Chinese sources on Chinggis Khan. There are other Chinese historical sources such as *Heidasilue* and *Mengdabeilu* recently translated by C. Atwood as *The Rise of the Mongols* (2021), however, they do not present Chinggis Khan's life from his childhood to his death. L. Hambis and P. Pelliot translated *The Campaigns of Chinggis Khan* into French in 1951, an anonymous work that covers the campaigns of Chinggis Khan and Ögödei Khan. *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* and *Jami' al-Tawarikh* were written based on this source, and in this thesis, I used *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* as it already contains information from *The Campaigns of Chinggis Khan*. I also counterchecked the given information with C. Atwood's translation of *History of Yuan, Chapter 1*, published in 2020, to obtain a more accurate result.

In this study, the focus has been on the fair and harsh policies of Chinggis Khan to reveal his perception of medieval Mongolian, Persian, and Chinese historical sources. As a result, I reveal that Chinggis Khan is portrayed as a fair ruler who is not afraid to take drastic measures when necessary, and these traits were reconciled by legitimization reason with emphasizing their necessity or by simply ignored via censorship.

## 1.5 Chapters

Initially, to find the answer to my research question, I examined Chinggis Khan's life and the events during his lifetime since it will allow us to understand his personality, policies, and the environment he lived, in Chapter 2. After his early life as an individual and rising power is presented in the first part of this chapter, the second part will deal with his life as a ruler when he became the Great Khan in 1206 until his death in 1227.

Chapter 3 focuses on *The Secret History of the Mongols* by explaining the historical background of the composition process, speculations about its composition time, author(s), and the reason for the composition. Thereafter, Chapter 4 examines *Jami' al-tawarikh*, while Chapter 5 presents *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* in the same context of *The Secret History*. Subsequently, the perception of Chinggis Khan in these sources is analyzed through his fair and harsh policies, including similarities and differences, in Chapter 6. Lastly, concluding remarks are presented in Chapter 7.

## CHAPTER 2

### AN OVERVIEW OF CHINGGIS KHAN'S LIFE

#### 2.1 Early life of Chinggis Khan

Our knowledge regarding Chinggis Khan's early life has limitations due to the scarcity of written records. In the 12th century, tribes were the fundamental unit of society,<sup>17</sup> and every nomad was a member of the military. When Chinggis Khan was born, there were different political groups, cultures, ideologies, and religions, but not a strong and stable political power that would unite the scattered tribes in the region. Therefore, people lived in disunity and instability as an independent group of tribes or clans,<sup>18</sup> longing for a strong leader who would unite them and provide securer living conditions.<sup>19</sup>

At that time, R.W. Dunnell defined, the identity of the Mongols by ecological and political elements, while cultural identity was fluid but not formless.<sup>20</sup> By this, the author meant that the Mongols shaped their identities according to the geographical conditions or the status of the political leaders they supported, while their cultural identities varied depending on where they went or what they believed in. Daily life in the steppe was challenging, and the nomads needed to be mobile to adapt themselves quickly to new conditions. Furthermore, they lived on hunting and pastoral nomadism and consequently, they did not feel attached to one place. Due to harsh climate conditions, fleeing from hostile tribes, and in search of grass and water, as the Chinese sources describe them, they changed locations and migrated. Defeat

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<sup>17</sup> Fletcher, Joseph, "The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives," 16.

<sup>18</sup> Yuvali, Abdulkadir, *Cengiz Han*, 31.

<sup>19</sup> Ratchnevsky, Paul, *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy*, 14.

<sup>20</sup> Dunnell, Ruth, *Chinggis Khan: World Conqueror*, 13-14.

by the enemy was another reason for migration, as they needed to change location for survival.

During that time, three strong tribes were present in Mongolia. The Tatar, the mortal enemies of the Mongols, lived in the south of the Kerülen River. On their west side, the Kerait, regarded as a Turkic tribe, lived in the Orkhon valley. Lastly, the Naiman, whose name was Mongolian but of Turkic origin, lived in the upper course of the Irtysh River. According to Ratchnevsky, the Kerait and the Naiman had a higher level of culture than the Mongols did, as they possessed a royal family and military structure.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, there was the Song dynasty in the south of China, Jurchen Jin from north of the Yellow River to Manchuria, and Xi Xia (the Tangut) in the northwest of the Song Dynasty. In Central Asia, the most powerful governments were the states of Khawarizm Shah and Qara Khitai. Conversely, in Anatolia, Seljuks, Ayyubids, and some emirs had power.

Even though Chinggis Khan was born in this unstable environment, he managed to gain followers from different levels of society and build a world empire by ending disunity and bringing order to Mongolia. In this context, we first need to know his early life. The events of Chinggis Khan before he became the Great Khan and the conditions of that period are presented in the first part of this chapter. Then, the events after he became the Great Khan are examined along with the terms of that period, such as being neighbors with the most powerful states of 13th century Asia, the Jin Dynasty and Khwarazm Shahs. In this way, while evaluating his achievements more accurately, we can reveal how his fair and harsh policies are reconciled and understand the perception of Chinggis Khan in major primary sources.

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<sup>21</sup> Ratchnevsky, Paul, *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy*, 4.

### 2.1.1 Chinggis Khan's birth, environment, and captivity by the Tayichi'ud

Chinggis Khan was born approximately around the mid-12th century<sup>22</sup> in the unstable environment of the Mongolian steppe. He was the first son of Yesügei, a respectful nomad chief, and Hö'elun, a beautiful woman<sup>23</sup> from the Olqunu'ut clan. As *The Secret History* states, he was born at Deli'ün Boldaq by the Onan River with a blood clot the size of a knucklebone in his right hand.<sup>24</sup> According to the Mongol custom, Yesügei named his son after the Tatar leader Temüjin Üge whom he defeated in battle at that time.

Temüjin<sup>25</sup> grew up along the Onon River with his brothers Jochi Qasar, Qachi'un and Temüge, his sister Temülün, and half-brothers Bekter and Belgütei. He also met his first *anda* (sworn brothers), Jamuqa, the Jadirat, who had a common ancestor with Temüjin. When Temüjin was 9 or 10 years old, his father decided to marry him to someone from Lady Hö'elun's clan, because he believed that maternal uncles of Temüjin would assist him to find a bride for his son. On the way, they met Dei Sechen<sup>26</sup> of the Onggirat tribe, and after a conversation, they decided to marry Temüjin and Dei Sechen's daughter Börte who was a year older than Temüjin. Later in history, Börte was known as a beautiful and intelligent woman, and as recorded in historical sources, Temüjin valued her ideas and frequently listened to her advice.

Following the Mongol customs, Yesügei left his son with his in-laws and asked them to supervise Temüjin since he was afraid of dogs, then he returned home.

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<sup>22</sup> His birthday is a controversial issue. It differs from 1155 to 1167. Rashid al-Din says Temüjin was born in Qaqai Yil, which corresponds to the year 549 of the Hijra and begins in the month of Dhu'l-Qa'da [January 1155]. However, it would be too early when we consider the fact that he died in 1227. On the other hand, *The Secret History* says he was born in 1162, while *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* says it was in 1161. For this reason, I did not highlight a date and stated it as mid-12th century since this is a discussion of another study.

<sup>23</sup> Dunnell, Ruth, *Chinggis Khan: World Conqueror*, 20.

<sup>24</sup> It is a sign that he is going to be a great ruler, a world conqueror.

<sup>25</sup> Temüjin means blacksmith.

<sup>26</sup> Dai Noyan in *Jami' al-tawarikh*.

Although many sources generally describe Temüjin as tough and brave, they occasionally emphasize that he also had human feelings, such as his feelings about Börte, his children, and his mother, and his fear of dogs. While *Jami' al-tawarikh* does not mention these matters in detail, especially his fear of dogs, *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* avoids giving information about Chinggis Khan's personal feelings or making comments as much as possible.

On his way, Yesügei met several Tatar people and joined their feast to quench his thirst. However, they recognized him and poisoned his drink to take revenge for his previous victory over the Tatar. Before he died, he requested that they should bring back his oldest son, but although Temüjin returned home, his people did not welcome him because they were unwilling to accept a young chief. After Temüjin lost his father, he experienced many difficulties and tried to survive against those who felt enmity and contempt for him, like the Tayichi'ud tribe, who were relatives of the Borjigin Mongols and considered Yesügei's son a threat.<sup>27</sup>

When Yesügei died, the Tayichi'ud people decamped and left the widowed Hö'elun behind with her young children. As stated in *The Secret History* and *Jami' al-tawarikh*, Hö'elun was a brave and intelligent woman, and she tried to convince them to stay, but even though she managed to persuade some of the Tayichi'ud, eventually, they all left. Hereupon, Lady Hö'elun and her children struggled to survive by hunting and eating wild plants. At a very young age, Temüjin understood what it means to be betrayed and to be alone. Perhaps, that is why he valued loyalty and talented people regardless of their social status in the future rather than kinship.

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<sup>27</sup> de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 20-21, § 79.

One day, Temüjin was fishing with Qasar, Bekter, and Belgütei by the river. His half-brothers snatched the fish they caught<sup>28</sup> and most likely caused Temüjin and Qasar to resent them since they believed that they could no longer live together because it was selfish to steal the food they were supposed to share, and it would be hard to trust each other in the future. Therefore, Temüjin and Qasar killed Bekter by shooting arrows but spared Belgütei's life because this was Bekter's last wish.

After that incident, the Tayichi'ud chased Temüjin, the eldest son of Yesügei, intending to prevent him from causing trouble in the future. Temüjin's family resisted them and helped him escape to the forest, but after fleeing for days, the Tayichi'ud people captured him. We do not know the duration of his captivity, but Rashid al-Din states that he fought against the Tayichi'ud people in many battles, and they held him captive several times.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, when the Tayichi'ud people were busy having a feast in the bank of the Onan,<sup>30</sup> Temüjin managed to attack the guard who was watching him and run away from the Tayichi'ud camp. Sorqan Sira of the Suldus helped him escape and mislead the Tayichi'ud people. Afterward, Temüjin traced the tracks of his family and finally joined them.

The early life of Chinggis Khan reflects some examples of his personal feelings and provides a glimpse of his personality. Furthermore, this period affected his life as an individual and his policies as a leader in the future. The people living in this period grew tired because of the continuous disorder and insecure environment and were longing for the past.<sup>31</sup> After all the things he underwent during this time,

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<sup>28</sup> It was recorded as their second theft in *The Secret History* (Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 68, § 76-77; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 20, §76-77). First a lark, now a dace. However, this incident was not mentioned in *Jami' al-tawarikh* or *Yuan Shi*, Chapter 1.

<sup>29</sup> Only *Jami' al-tawarikh* says Temüjin was abducted several times (Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 159). According to *The Secret History*, he was abducted only once, then escaped.

<sup>30</sup> de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 23, § 81.

<sup>31</sup> Gömeç, Saadettin Yağmur, *Çingiz Han ve Ortaya Çıktığı Çağın Özellikleri*, 30.

Chinggis Khan probably shared the same feelings with these people, and naturally wanted to be stronger and change this situation. His battles, which are presented in the following parts, illustrate this better.

#### 2.1.2 Battle against the Merkid (1183/1184)

After Temüjin escaped from the Tayichi'ud captivity and met his family, he married his fiancée Börte and received a black sable coat as a wedding gift for Temüjin's mother.<sup>32</sup> It was an expensive item<sup>33</sup> and would assist them in finding the support they required, thus they had to use it wisely. Temüjin knew that he needed allies to defeat his enemies who acknowledge his weakness in being alone. Consequently, he decided to give the sable coat to Toghril Khan, the Kerait, Yesügei's *anda* and sought his protection.

We can see that allying with Toghril Khan was a wise decision as the Merkid proceeded to attack Temüjin and his family. The Three Merkid<sup>34</sup> sought revenge for the abduction of Mother Hö'elun when she was proceeding to marry a Merkid. Temüjin managed to escape before they arrived, but he had to leave his wife behind because they did not have a horse for her.<sup>35</sup> The Merkid could not capture Temüjin, but they did not intend to return empty-handed, so they took Lady Börte captive in retaliation for Mother Hö'elun's abduction.

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<sup>32</sup> de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 30, § 96.

<sup>33</sup> It was referred to as the "King of the Furs" by the Mongols. The first class was 2000 gold bezants while the second class was around 1000 (Ratchnevsky, P. *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy*, 32.).

<sup>34</sup> They were named Toqto'a of the Uduyt Merkid, Dayir Usun of the U'as Merkid, and Qa'atai Darmala of the Qa'at Merkid. Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 93, § 111; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 41, § 111.

<sup>35</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 81, § 99 de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 31, § 99.

After Temüjin managed to escape, he and his brothers sought Toghril Khan's help to save Börte. He also sent a message to his *anda* Jamuqa and asked him to help with two units of ten thousand. They decided that Temüjin would attack them from the right wing with Toghril Khan while Jamuqa would approach from the left wing. Once they reunited their armies, they attacked the Merkid.

During the battle, Temüjin sought Börte while some of the Merkid fled in haste. In the end, he found her when she was nine months pregnant with Jochi<sup>36</sup> and their reunion with his wife was described<sup>37</sup> as an emotional moment. After Temüjin defeated the Merkid, he set up his camp with Jamuqa while Toghril Khan went in the direction of the Black Forest by the Tu'ula River. This battle played a significant role in turning Temüjin into a confident warrior and attracting followers as his reputation increased. However, these developments began to affect his relationship with Jamuqa.

### 2.1.3 Battle against Jamuqa (1187)

When Temüjin was eleven years old, he became *anda* with Jamuqa for the first time when they were both raised as “hostages” representatives of the leading families of the vassals at the court of Toghril Khan.<sup>38</sup> Upon defeating the Merkid, they became sworn friends again by exchanging a whistling arrowhead and a knob-headed arrow. After getting along very well for a year and a half, Jamuqa suggested moving their

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<sup>36</sup> Thackston says Jochi means an unexpected guest in *Jami' al-tawarikh*, p. 146, footnote 1.

According to *The Secret History* and *Jami' al-tawarikh*, Chaghatay opposed his successorship to the throne. Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 241, § 254; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 183, § 254.

<sup>37</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 92, 93, § 110; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 40-41, § 110.

<sup>38</sup> Togan, İsenbike, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations*, 75.

camp near to the mountain for horse-herders, and close to the river for shepherds and lamb-herders.<sup>39</sup> Temüjin was confused about Jamuqa's intentions, so according to *The Secret History*, he sought advice from his mother.<sup>40</sup> At that time, Börte heard their conversation and suggested separating their camp from Jamuqa because she believed he was tired of their friendship.<sup>41</sup> In this respect, I. Togan says it also means Jamuqa was against any kind of unification, and his later title *gürkhan* (*the Qan of all people*)<sup>42</sup> was symbolizing his opposition towards that,<sup>43</sup> as it means he viewed himself as the ruler of all nomads and preferred to rule with a joint venture.<sup>44</sup>

Temüjin, as someone in his early 20s or early 30s, was beginning to become a wise man and to learn how to use the talents of the people around him. He has proven this many times by listening to people he trusted regardless of their social status, social background, or gender. Following his wife's advice, Temüjin and his family decided to travel at night but unintentionally frightened the Tayichi'ud people as they passed close to their camp and led them to join Jamuqa for the upcoming battles.

Temüjin's separation from Jamuqa made it easier for him to act on his own as a rising power and led the nomadic tribes to join either Temüjin or Jamuqa. Jamuqa was from the Jadaran Mongols and Temüjin was from the Borjigin Mongols. They both were descendants of Alan Go'a the mythical ancestress of the steppe Mongols,

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<sup>39</sup> His attitude and what it means had been interpreted in different ways by many scholars, but since this issue requires detailed studying, I will not discuss it here.

<sup>40</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 98, 99, §118; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 45-46, §118.

<sup>41</sup> Rachenevsky states that since the horse-herders were the aristocrats of the steppe, the sheep-herders, including Temüjin, had a lower social status (Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy*, 37, 38). It is a controversial topic that was discussed by many scholars. For further information also look at Gumilev, L. N. (1987). *Searches for an imaginary kingdom: The legend of the kingdom of Prester John*. (R. E. F. Smith, Trans.). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1970).

<sup>42</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 30.

<sup>43</sup> Togan, İsenbike, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations*, 128-129.

<sup>44</sup> Togan, İsenbike, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations*, 130.

but Jamuqa had the support of his clan and the mindset to act as a joint venture with his followers,<sup>45</sup> unlike Temüjin, at that time. They were independent and had ambitions to become like their elders<sup>46</sup> and achieve power rather than living together with other clans. Therefore, the nomads chose the person they saw best for their interests.

Although this situation will turn two close friends into rivals for the competition of the leadership of the nomads in the future, Temüjin's separation from Jamuqa has been one of the most significant turning points of his career. When Temüjin set up his camp by the Kimurqa Stream, many tribesmen joined him. He was patient and knew when to act. Accordingly, when Temüjin was chosen as *khan* of the Mongol tribe and named Chinggis Khan<sup>47</sup> at the great assembly, he took advantage of Toghril Khan's absence to establish his autonomy against Jamuqa.<sup>48</sup> Hereupon, he sent envoys to announce his khanship and gave official positions to his followers such as swordsmen, herder, cook, and chamberlain. As Temüjin's protector and ally, Toghril Khan was pleased to hear the news, but Jamuqa was not happy with this situation, which intensified the competition of the leadership of the nomads.

One day, one of the younger kinsmen of Jamuqa stole the herd of horses of one of Temüjin's men and fled, but Temüjin's man located and stole his horses back, and then killed the thief. The relationship between Jamuqa and Temüjin was already terrible. Temüjin and Jamuqa knew that when they competed for leadership on the

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<sup>45</sup> Togan, İsenbike, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations*, 129.

<sup>46</sup> Togan, İsenbike, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations*, 76.

<sup>47</sup> Here, he was chosen as tribal khan of the Mongols (Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 7). He will become Chinggis Khan in the great *quriltai* in 1206. Although from here on out, he is mentioned as Chinggis Khan in *The Secret History*, I will use the name Temüjin until 1206.

<sup>48</sup> Togan, İsenbike, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations*, 83.

Mongol steppe, eventually, fighting against each other was inevitable. This incident started a conflict that would inevitably happen one day. Jamuqa and thirteen tribes went to Gürelgü Mountains to take revenge from Temüjin for his man. Hence, Temüjin and thirteen *küren*<sup>49</sup> prepared to fight against Jamuqa at Dalan Baljut in 1187. During the battle, Temüjin could not withstand the attacks and refuge by the Onon River.

Here, we see conflicting information according to our sources. In *The Secret History*, Jamuqa ordered princes of Chinos to be boiled alive in seventy cauldrons with the joy of making them take refuge.<sup>50</sup> Further, he cut off the head of Chaqa'an U's of the Ne'üs and dragged it away bound to the tail of his horse. Contrarily, in *Jami' al-tawarikh*, Temüjin is the one who threatens his rivals by saying that he will boil them alive in cauldrons if they do not surrender,<sup>51</sup> while *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* does not mention this incident. Since these sources have different perceptions on some incidents, the image of Chinggis Khan is reflected differently. According to *The Secret History*, Temüjin is in the role of a protector in whom people take refuge, while in *Jami' al-tawarikh*, he possesses the image of someone who scares his opponents with draconian threats. Temüjin faced difficulties in this battle because he lost many soldiers and had to retreat for a period, nevertheless, he attracted many followers of Jamuqa to his side because either people did not approve of Jamuqa's harsh measures or they feared Chinggis Khan's threat.

After the battle of Dalan Baljut, we are unaware of his whereabouts until he fought against the Tatar in 1196. In this respect, Ratchnevsky suggested that, after

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<sup>49</sup> According to *Jami' al-tawarikh*, *küren* (also known as *güra'an*) means a circle and consists of various soldiers. Their arrangement was given in detail in *Jami' al-tawarikh* (Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 160-161).

<sup>50</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 110, § 129; de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 54, § 129.

<sup>51</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 161.

the defeat at Dalan Baljut, Temüjin sought protection from the Jin dynasty.<sup>52</sup> M.

Biran agrees with the idea that Temüjin might have been in Jin captivity, at least for some time, when he was not present.<sup>53</sup> Then, Dunnell says Temüjin had undergone a period of exile in Jurchen (Jin) territory.<sup>54</sup> Although most scholars define it in different ways, such as captivity, protection, and exile, they agree that Temüjin was in the Jin territories. Since this period of Temüjin's life is not mentioned in the sources, it is difficult for us to determine what happened to him during these times.

#### 2.1.4 Battle against the Tatar (1196)

Temüjin was pleased to have Jamuqa's followers on his side and prepared a banquet in the forest by the Onon to celebrate these developments. Temüjin was becoming stronger as he found a protector in, Toghril Khan, defeated the Merkid and attracted Jamuqa's men to his side. He was proud and self-confident because of his accomplishments and what he was about to achieve. Although the tribal quarrel during the feast almost ruined the alliance, when they heard of the conflicts between the Tatar and Jin, they stopped arguing among themselves and prepared for battle against the Tatar. For ages, the Tatar and the Mongols did not get along well, and Temüjin had hostile feelings towards them as they killed his father, Yesügei. Therefore, when they heard their mortal enemies were coming their way while fleeing from the Jin Dynasty, they prepared to defeat them permanently.

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<sup>52</sup> Ratchnevsky, Paul, *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy*, 49-50.

<sup>53</sup> Biran, Michal, *Chinggis Khan: Makers of the Muslim World*, 36.

<sup>54</sup> Dunnell, Ruth, *Chinggis Khan: World Conqueror* 34.

Altan Khan of the Kitat people<sup>55</sup> conflicted with Megüjin Se'ültü<sup>56</sup> and other Tatars because they would not agree to a deal. Thus, he ordered his commander to send troops against them and led the Tatar to flee in the direction of Temüjin's camp. Thereupon, Temüjin sent a message to Toghril Khan to take advantage of this situation and destroy the Tatar together.

Toghril Khan and Temüjin asked the Jürkin to help them in this battle, but they did not appear, thus they implemented the attack by themselves. When they became victorious, in addition to defeating their mortal enemies and possessing valuable booty, they also gained titles from the Kitat commander with Altan Khan's approval. He gave Temüjin the title of *ja'ut quri*<sup>57</sup> and gave Toghril Khan the title of *Ong*<sup>58</sup> upon defeating the Tatar.

In the meantime, the Jürkin attacked Temüjin's camp, stripped fifty men of their clothing, and killed ten men when Temüjin was at the battle against the Tatar. Temüjin was in a rage upon hearing the news and decided to attack them. Their insulting behavior at the banquet by the Onan, not coming to help Temüjin against the Tatar when he asked, and now attacking his camp was unforgivable. His position as a ruler of the Mongols was not stable, therefore, he had to show his power to his enemies as well as his followers. Only a determined ruler could achieve his goals and provide his people their desires, so he needed to take drastic measures when necessary.

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<sup>55</sup> Ruler of the Jin Dynasty. Also mentioned as Altan Khan of Cathay in *Jami' al-tawarikh* (Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 164).

<sup>56</sup> Ma'üjin Sa'ültü in *Jami' al-tawarikh*.

<sup>57</sup> Commander of hundreds in *The Secret History*; magnificent commander in Cathanian in *Jami' al-tawarikh*. For further information look at Vovin, Alexander. (2021). On the origin of the middle Mongolian title *ča'ut quri* ~ *ja'ut quri*. In T. Karaayak & U. Uzunkaya (Eds.), *Esengü Bitig: Doğumunun 60. Yılında Zühal Ölmez Armağanı* (pp. 795-800). İstanbul: Kesit Yayınları.

<sup>58</sup> King or prince (王 wang).

Accordingly, Temüjin plundered the Jürkin people and then killed their leaders.<sup>59</sup> He defeated them and established dominance over all the Jürkin clan. Temüjin was patient, intelligent, and never tolerated disobedience, so after annihilating the Jürkin, he made Būri Bökö of the Jürkin and Belgütei wrestle to take revenge for having injured Belgütei at the banquet by the Onon. In the end, Būri Bökö died and the Jürkin became Temüjin's subjects. Meanwhile, Jamuqa did not stay idle and started to increase his power in the region against Temüjin.

#### 2.1.5 The battle between Temüjin, Ong Khan Toghril, and Jamuqa (1201)

While Temüjin continued to increase his power after allying with Toghril Khan, Jamuqa was also getting stronger. In 1201, many tribesmen from different tribes joined Jamuqa and chose him as *gür khan*.<sup>60</sup> Since only the Kerait used this title in Mongolia,<sup>61</sup> Jamuqa was placing himself in a higher position than Temüjin and on an equal position to Ong Khan Toghril. This development jeopardized Temüjin's future since Jamuqa was a strong rival against his khanship. When Temüjin heard Jamuqa and his allies wanted to attack him, he believed it was time to surpass one of his biggest rivals to rule all Mongols. They both had an increasing influence over many nomads and fought to build their hegemony in the steppe. Jamuqa had his clansmen, the Jadaran Mongols and others by his side, but Temüjin required assistance to defeat him. Therefore, he sent a message to Ong Khan Toghril and offered to confront Jamuqa together.

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<sup>59</sup> They swore that they would be loyal to Temüjin and accept any punishment if they broke their oath.

<sup>60</sup> Khan of all the people in Onon's translation (Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 30, §141); universal ruler in I. de Rachewiltz's translation (de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 63, § 141); emperor of rulers and kings in *Jami' al-tawarikh* (Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 182).

<sup>61</sup> Biran, Michal, *Chinggis Khan: Makers of the Muslim World*, 36-37.

Temüjin and Ong Khan set up a few observation posts and sent vanguards ahead. While Toghril fought against Jamuqa, Temüjin was fighting against the Tayichi'ud people, who were fighting for Jamuqa. In the end, Temüjin destroyed the Tayichi'ud, but Jamuqa managed to escape with a few men. Nevertheless, when Jamuqa retreated, he lost many people and plundered the camps of the rest of his followers.

As mentioned many times in *The Secret History* and *Jami' al-tawarikh*, Temüjin never tolerated betrayal and was always careful of what belonged to him. He showed mercy to those who were loyal to their rightful lord until the end, even though they were enemies, but did not forgive the people who betrayed him like his *anda* Jamuqa or Ong Khan Toghril, whom he saw as his father. In this respect, the following parts will address the disagreements between Temüjin and Ong Khan Toghril and explain how Temüjin deals with them.

#### 2.1.6 Disputes between Temüjin and Ong Khan Toghril (1202)

After Temüjin killed the Tayichi'ud and became famous for his outstanding achievements, many tribes came to ally with him. In addition, Jaqa Gambu of the Kerait, Ong Khan Toghril's brother, joined and helped Temüjin to defeat the Merkid and gain many followers from the Kerait people. The increasing power of Temüjin did not disturb Ong Khan Toghril; at least he did not display it publically, since they maintained a close relationship.

In 1202, by defeating the Tatar alone, Temüjin took control of eastern Mongolia and became almost as powerful as Ong Khan Toghril. In the same year, Ong Khan Toghril plundered the Merkid but did not share anything with Temüjin.

Although this angered Temüjin, he did not say anything out of respect for Ong Khan Toghril and also not to jeopardize their relationship. Temüjin did not value material possessions more than human relations as he did not hesitate to share the spoils of the battles. The difficulties and betrayals he experienced since childhood were influential in shaping his way of thinking and his success in establishing a powerful state. Ong Khan Toghril helped him survive as his protector in his most desperate times and stood by his side in the battles. Therefore, Temüjin respected him as his father, and it was not easy for him to give up on him.

Afterward, they continued working together and fought against the Naiman. After killing him when he was hunting, they decided to spend the night at their camp and attack the rest of the Naiman the day after, however, Jamuqa appeared by joining Ong Khan Toghril. Jamuqa said Temüjin was sending envoys to the Naiman for a long time to make Ong Khan Toghril suspicious and ruin his relationship with Temüjin. Thus, Ong Khan Toghril left Temüjin on the battlefield and moved his camp.

In this respect, Gumilev believes that there was another reason for Ong Khan Toghril's sudden departure. Gumilev argues that Ong Khan Toghril left Temüjin on the battlefield when they were supposed to attack the Naiman together because Temüjin asked him to appoint himself as the older brother of Senggüm.<sup>62</sup> It was a political request rather than a family union since that meant being the rightful heir of the Kerait throne. At first, Ong Khan Toghril refused and left his side, but when the Naiman seized his people and goods, he asked for help from Temüjin, which indicated approval to his former proposal.

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<sup>62</sup> Gumilev, Lev, *Searches for an Imaginary Kingdom*, 247.

Gumilev also states that there is no conclusive evidence about Jamuqa trying to ruin the relationship between Ong Khan Toghril and Temüjin. Additionally, even if Jamuqa said those words to his *anda*, there was no reason for Ong Khan Toghril to believe him instead of Temüjin. *The Secret History* and *Jami' al-tawarikh* give contradictory information<sup>63</sup> about Jamuqa's character and intentions,<sup>64</sup> while *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* is silent, so it is unknown why Ong Khan Toghril left the battlefield. The contradicting information of these sources is explained in proper places in Chapter 6. Nevertheless, Temüjin was not a man who would sacrifice his own life and the lives of his men in vain when he was certain that he could not win. Therefore, when he could not find Ong Khan Toghril in their camp and realized he had to fight alone against the Naiman, Temüjin decamped and avoided the Naiman.

In the meantime, the Naiman captured Ong Khan Toghril's family with all of his people. Ong Khan Toghril asked Temüjin to send his "four steeds"<sup>65</sup> to help him to take his family back. Even though Ong Khan Toghril betrayed Temüjin by leaving him alone during the battle, Temüjin agreed to help him and saved his family, including Senggüm, who was about to be captured by the Naiman. In return for Temüjin's help, Ong Khan Toghril declared Temüjin as his oldest son and legitimate heir. Being in a father and son relationship with the Kerait leader Ong Khan Toghril, increased Temüjin's power and strengthened his position as ruler of the Mongols. However, Senggüm had no intention to accept the declaration, as he was displeased with this new political formation.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> In *The Secret History*, Jamuqa says Temüjin had contact with the Naiman to ruin the relationship between Ong Khan Toghril and Temüjin (Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 138, § 163; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 80-81, § 160), but it was not mentioned in *Jami' al-tawarikh*.

<sup>64</sup> Gumilev, Lev, *Searches for an Imaginary Kingdom*, 254, 255.

<sup>65</sup> According to U. Onon, four great marshalls of the Mongols were Bo'orchu, Muqali, Boroqul, and Chila'un Ba'atur (Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 138, § 163).

<sup>66</sup> Togan, Isenbike, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations*, 94.

### 2.1.7 Battle against the Kerait and Baljuna Covenant (1202)

The relations between Temüjin and the Kerait became fragile when Temüjin suggested marrying Senggüm's younger sister with his son Jochi and giving a daughter to Senggüm's son to foster a closer relationship. However, Senggüm refused his proposal because he thought Temüjin was not at their level, even though he always envied his increasing power. In 1203, Jamuqa took this opportunity and convinced Senggüm to kill Temüjin before he got stronger. Ong Khan tried not to participate in his son's endeavor, but eventually relented and chose Senggüm's side.

Accordingly, the Kerait sent an envoy to Temüjin to invite him for the betrothal feast to have his bride and set a trap to kill him. As a great strategist, Temüjin had spies everywhere because he needed to be aware of his surroundings to take precautions. Temüjin managed to escape from Ong Khan Toghril's men when two horse-herders warned him,<sup>67</sup> but, after this incident, a battle between Temüjin and the Kerait-Jamuqa coalition was inevitable.

Temüjin took refuge near the Lake of Baljuna and started to plan how to fight against the Kerait and Jamuqa. He was about to be dispossessed of everything he had ever earned, but at that moment, he also felt grateful to the people who stayed with him until the end. Therefore, they drank water from the Baljuna and promised to stay together and endure the consequences of the upcoming battle.<sup>68</sup> This incident is also known as the Baljiuna Covenant.<sup>69</sup> In the future, the people who swore their loyalty to Temüjin at Lake Baljuna were to receive bountiful rewards for their services.

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<sup>67</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 143-144, § 169; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 87- 88, § 169.

<sup>68</sup> Biran, Michal, *Chinggis Khan: Makers of the Muslim World*, 38.

<sup>69</sup> This name was coined by F. W. Cleaves in "The Historicity of the Baljuna Covenant" in 1955 (HJAS 18, 1955, 357-421.).

Ong Khan Toghril decided who to send to the battle, but he wanted to stand prepared with the main part of his army and asked Jamuqa to set the troops in battle array in his place. Thereupon, Jamuqa thought that Ong Khan Toghril was less capable than he was because he let him put his army in order when Ong Khan Toghril should have done it himself. For that reason, Jamuqa sent a message to Temüjin and informed him about the battle array.<sup>70</sup> Temüjin arranged his troops according to this message and defeated the vanguards of the Kerait. This battle is known as the Battle of the Qalajin Alat.

The message that Jamuqa sent to warn Temüjin is only mentioned in *The Secret History*. Although it would be absurd for him to warn Temüjin instead of destroying him with a surprise attack, he might have wished to give him a chance to fight since the Kerait outnumbered the Mongols. Jamuqa's intentions aside, it is interesting that Chinggis Khan trusts him after all he has done. They are both constantly fighting, trusting, and helping each other like real siblings.<sup>71</sup> Even though they fought, they fought fair and left the decision to the Heaven.

During the battle, Senggüm went ahead without Ong Khan Toghril's permission and injured his cheek with an arrow, thus, all the Kerait returned and protected him by breaking the battle array. Upon the Kerait's departure, Temüjin moved his camp and sent a long message to his opponents explaining how they betrayed him, and thus, he had no other choice but to fight them.<sup>72</sup> Additionally, as a great strategist and diplomat, he sent a message to Ong Khan Toghril pretending to be Qasar. In this message, Qasar promised to be loyal to Ong Khan Toghril against

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<sup>70</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 146-147, § 170; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 90-91, § 170.

<sup>71</sup> The reason for that was the oath of brotherhood, *anda*.

<sup>72</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 187-190; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 96-104, § 177-181.

his brother in return for his family, the clans, and the soldiers he held captive, which probably Ong Khan Toghril captured when Temüjin retreated to Baljuna. He wanted to meet with him by the Kerülen River, and Ong Khan Toghril was unsuspecting and prepared a feast while waiting for Qasar. Temüjin and his followers surrounded Ong Khan Toghril, and they defeated the Kerait after fighting for three days. Ong Khan Toghril and Senggüm managed to run away to the Naiman territory. However, the Naiman patrolmen killed Ong Khan Toghril<sup>73</sup> because they did not recognize him, and took his head to their ruler Tayang Khan.

As a result, Senggüm fled into Chöl<sup>74</sup> after his father's death, but died on his way. After defeating the Kerait and making them his subjects, Temüjin conquered east and central Mongolia. Now his next target were the Naiman, who controlled the western part of the country and were one of the biggest threats in the region.

#### 2.1.8 Battle against the Naiman (1204)

For a long time, the growing influence of the Mongols in the east troubled Tayang Khan of the Naiman. In 1204, Tayang offered the leader of the Önggüt to attack Temüjin together despite the warning of his men. However, the Önggüt's leader refused his offer and informed Temüjin about the intentions of the Naiman.

As the khan of the Mongols, Temüjin gathered a *quriltai* and decided to attack the Naiman. He moved his camp, formed the units, and appointed the men he trusted to strategic positions in the battle array. After changing numerous locations, the Mongols came to Sa'ari Steppe to fight against the Naiman.<sup>75</sup> Temüjin's army

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<sup>73</sup> Qori Sübeci and Titiq Sa'al at Nekün Usun of Didik Saqal.

<sup>74</sup> The desert.

<sup>75</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 172, § 193.

was tired, and their horses were lean after the battle against the Kerait. Therefore, to confuse the Naiman and delay confrontation until the horses regained their strength, Temüjin ordered numerous fires to be set and scared the enemy by taking advice from one of his chamberlains.

When Tayang Khan's patrolmen conveyed that the Mongols were crowded, even though their geldings were weak, Tayang Khan sent a message to his son Güchülüg Khan to withdraw from the battle. However, Güchülüg and the Naiman commanders refused to retreat by accusing Tayang Khan of cowardice. Even if they are tribal chiefs, a ruler must listen to the wishes of his men and follow the desired of the majority, otherwise, he risks losing the support of his men, his position, and even his life in the process. Therefore, although Tayang Khan was accused of being a coward, he was required to listen to his men. Subsequently, the Naiman started the battle with Jamuqa by their side.

During the battle, Temüjin and his followers managed to force the Naiman patrolmen to retreat into a cliff, where the main body of the Naiman army was stationed. Unable to resist Temüjin's force, Tayang and Jamuqa retreated further up the mountain, but when Tayang continued moving up in fear of the Mongols, Jamuqa deserted him and went his own way. In this regard, *The Secret History* says that Jamuqa sent a message to Temüjin to inform him about Tayang's position, although there is no mention of such event in the *Jami' al-tawarikh* or *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*.

At night, Temüjin surrounded Tayang and set up his camp to rest. During that time, some of the Naiman attempted to escape. However, they were unable to locate their way in the dark and fell off the cliff to their death. After defeating the Naiman and killing Tayang Khan, Temüjin asserted dominance over all of the Naiman tribes on the southern slopes of the Altai. Güchülüg Khan managed to escape along with a

few men to his uncle, but Temüjin took control over many tribes<sup>76</sup> who were supporting the Naiman.

In the same year, Temüjin fought against Toqto'a Beki of the Merkid because they did not submit and ran away. Toqto'a Beki and his sons managed to take refuge to Tayang's brother, but they lost their people in this battle. After defeating the Merkid, Temüjin became the most powerful ruler in all of Mongolia, and he managed to unite many tribes under his rule.

#### 2.1.9 Battle against the Tangut and exterminating Jamuqa (1205)

In 1205, Temüjin sent his army into the territory of the Tangut, and seized cities and obtained many booties. At that time, Güchülüg Khan of the Naiman and Toqto'a of the Merkid allied against Temüjin. In this battle, Toqto'a died, but Güchülüg Khan escaped and joined the *gür khan* of the Qara Khitai. Subsequently, Temüjin came back to his base camp and sent one of his trusted men after Toqto'a's sons.<sup>77</sup> After defeating the Naiman and the Merkid, Jamuqa was his only rival in Mongolia. Thus, he had to eliminate him to secure his position.

Jamuqa managed to escape with only five companions, but later, his companions betrayed him and brought him to Temüjin. Temüjin would never forgive someone who layed his hands on his rightful lord, so he killed them and offered Jamuqa to be companions again. Nonetheless, Jamuqa refused his offer and told Temüjin that he had to kill his last opponent to maintain his position as a ruler of the

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<sup>76</sup> He took control over the Dörben, the Tatar, the Qataqin, and the Salji'ut tribes.

<sup>77</sup> Their names were Qudu, Qal, and Cila'un.

Mongols. In the end, Temüjin killed him without shedding his blood<sup>78</sup> because he was a member of the Mongol clan, the Jadaran Mongols, and prepared a proper funeral for his *anda*. Accordingly, Gumilev says that the nomads often did not resort to torture and killed their enemies immediately, either by breaking their spine or ripping their hearts out to sacrifice them to their banners.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, killing Jamuqa without shedding his blood was uncommon for the Mongols but not an alien tradition. After Temüjin defeated the Naiman, the Merkid, and Jamuqa, except minor rebels, he finally had taken control of almost all of Mongolia.

## 2.2 After becoming the Great Khan

Since the nomads could not maintain a settled community under control for a long time without losing their own identity, they could only occupy those places for a short time.<sup>80</sup> However, Chinggis Khan succeeded in building a world empire consisting of settled and nomadic cultures and then established a new universal order<sup>81</sup> that included all his subjects via his fair and harsh policies. After becoming the preeminent ruler in Mongolian lands and beyond, Chinggis Khan's followers chose him as the Great Khan and defeated whoever stood in his way to maintain his power.

From that moment onward, the Mongols did not only mean a tribe in the Mongolian steppe, but a multiethnic society with various people from different

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<sup>78</sup> In *The Secret History*, Jamuqa requested to be killed without shedding his blood, but it was not mentioned in *Jami' al-tawarikh*. Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 189, § 201; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 132, § 201.

<sup>79</sup> Gumilev, Lev, *Searches for an Imaginary Kingdom*, 255.

<sup>80</sup> Sinor, Denis, "Reflections on the History and Historiography of the Nomad Empires of Central Eurasia," 9.

<sup>81</sup> For further information please look at Togan, İsenbike, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations*, 118-145.

regions, nations, religions, and social backgrounds who came under the sovereignty of Chinggis Khan. As Chinggis Khan conquered many lands, expanded his influence, and became the highest religious authority by reducing the powers of the shaman, the Mongol identity inherently gained a supratribal identity, which meant being the subjects of the Mongol Empire. Now, Chinggis Khan is the ruler of all the people he subjugated across Eurasia, not only the Mongol tribe.

### 2.2.1 Great *quriltai* (1206)

In 1206, Temüjin ordered a nine-footed white standard to be set up<sup>82</sup> and held a great *quriltai*. In the great *quriltai*, people from many tribes came to the source of the Onon River and united under Temüjin's rule by making him the Great Khan<sup>83</sup> and giving him the title of Chinggis Khan.<sup>84</sup> After Chinggis Khan formalized his status as the leader of all people in Mongolia,<sup>85</sup> he rewarded his loyal followers for helping to establish the Mongol Empire by appointing them to important positions,<sup>86</sup> especially those who were with him from the very beginning regardless their social status. He became the Great Khan due to his military and political abilities as he made alliances and strengthened his army by attracting talented people. In addition, his fairness and the ability to take drastic measures when necessary helped him maintain his power. He ended the constant disunity and instability in the region by uniting the different nations under his rule and establishing institutions to rule his subjects. After

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<sup>82</sup> The "nine-footed" white standard is explained in *The Secret History*. (de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 133-135, § 202).

<sup>83</sup> The ruler of Mongolia.

<sup>84</sup> Meaning strong and mighty monarch. It was given to him by Kōkōchū of the Qongqotan clan, Mönglik Echiga's son. He is also called Teb Tenggeri, all heavenly, the highest shamanist title. (Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 225-226, § 244).

<sup>85</sup> Biran, Michal, *Chinggis Khan: Makers of the Muslim World*, 39.

<sup>86</sup> de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 233, § 202.

the *quriltai* ended, he sent his trusted men<sup>87</sup> to seize the people who had not become his subjects yet. While some resisted subordination, others, the Uighur,<sup>88</sup> became the subjects of Chinggis Khan voluntarily.

In 1207, Chinggis Khan sent Jochi with troops of the right wing to fight the People of the Forest. After most of them submitted, he needed to deal with Kōkōchū Teb Tenggeri, the shaman. Kōkōchū had political power as the middle son of Mönglik and had an increasing influence on people as the religious link between the Heaven and the people. Consequently, as a man who has a political and religious impact over the nomads, he had begun to act arrogantly and tried to attain Chinggis Khan under his influence. Thus, the following part discusses the conflict between Chinggis Khan and Teb Tenggeri.

### 2.2.2 Exterminating Teb Tenggeri

When Qasar has left Chinggis Khan after his brother's disbelief that the seven sons of Qongqotan<sup>89</sup> beat him, Teb Tenggeri tried to break the trust between Chinggis Khan and Qasar, and then convince him that Qasar was going to take his nation from him. He believed Teb Tenggeri's accusations because, in addition to being a shaman, Teb Tenggeri was the son of Mönglik, a loyal subject of Chinggis Khan since his childhood. Furthermore, Chinggis Khan probably suspected his brother, knowing that Qasar was capable and strong enough to betray him if he wanted. After all, although Chinggis Khan had been the Great Khan, there was no hereditary succession system. He did not leave this possibility a chance and sent people to seize

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<sup>87</sup> Qubilai Noyan against Arslan Khan of the Qarlu'ut, Sübe'etei Ba'atur against the sons of the Toqto'a Beki, and Jebe against the Güchülüg of the Naiman.

<sup>88</sup> Biran, Michal, *Chinggis Khan: Makers of the Muslim World*, 18.

<sup>89</sup> Sons of Mönglik.

Qasar. After interrogating him harshly, Chinggis Khan released his brother by the intervention of Mother Hö'elun, yet he confiscated many of Qasar's subjects<sup>90</sup> so that there would be no similar problems in the future.

After that incident, many people, including subjects of Temüge Otchigin, the “people of the five tongues”<sup>91</sup> gathered under Teb Tenggeri. When Temüge sent a messenger to take his people back, Teb Tenggeri beat the messenger and let him leave barefoot. Following this, Temüge went himself to ask for the return of his people, but seven Qongqotan surrounded him and made him kneel behind Teb Tenggeri. After this humiliation and life-threatening incident, Temüge went to Chinggis Khan and informed him of the situation. After Börte silently listened to Temüge and Chinggis Khan's conversation, she suggested to Chinggis Khan that he needed to stop Teb Tenggeri to protect his power as a ruler and the future of his sons who would govern the Mongol Empire after he died.

It was unacceptable to injure and humiliate the younger brother of Chinggis Khan, so he listened to Börte's advice and decided to stop Teb Tenggeri. As mentioned in *The Secret History*, Mönglik and his seven sons came to Chinggis Khan's tent, Temüge forced Teb Tenggeri to wrestle, punishing him for the humiliation he suffered when Teb Tengri made him kneel. After Temüge pulled him out of the tent, three men who were waiting for him beforehand seized Teb Tenggeri and broke his spine. Chinggis Khan declared that Kōköchü Teb Tenggeri's death was a decision of Heaven and appointed another shaman from a small tribe. By reducing the role of the shaman as the link between ruler and the Heaven, Chinggis Khan established a direct connection with Heaven and showed everyone that the ruler was

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<sup>90</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 277, § 244; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 170, § 244.

<sup>91</sup> Possibly the Kerait tribesmen were distributed among the Mongols according to Rachewiltz. (de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 170, § 245, footnote 2).

superior to the shaman. Consequently, he favored Mönglik again but reduced the power of his sons.

In 1208, at the end of the battle against the Naiman-Merkid coalition, Chinggis Khan extended his influence and displayed the power of his newly organized army. Although not an easy task, Chinggis Khan began to unite Mongolia and the people from different tribes after the conquests by regulating the orders of society as soon as possible. He built centralized, organized, and stable institutions to govern the nations under his rules, such as the post system, military institutions like *tümen* (military unit of 10.000) and *kesig* (imperial guard), constitutional institutions like *quriltai* and *jasaq* (the law). In the end, since the nomads tended to lose their identity when they attempted to rule settled cultures for a long time, Chinggis Khan prevailed by giving a supratribal identity to the Mongols with these new regulations.

Chinggis Khan continued his expeditions after establishing authority over religious affairs, and his first target was the Tangut. The first attacks on the Tangut (Xi Xia) were in 1205 and 1207. After enlarging the scale of the campaigns in 1209, in 1211, Xi Xia had no choice but to submit to Chinggis Khan and agreed to give enormous tributes. After some of the Qara Khitai vassals<sup>92</sup> came under the rule of Chinggis Khan during that period, there was no one between the Mongols and the Jin Dynasty.

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<sup>92</sup> Uighurs, the Qarluq of Qayaliq, and the ruler of Almaliq were vassals of the Qara Khitai, but they submitted to Chinggis Khan.

### 2.2.3 Battle against the Jin Dynasty (1210-1215)

As the Jin dynasty (1115-1234), one of the last dynasties in Chinese lands, which ruled from the Yellow River to Manchuria and also known as Jurchen Jin, intervened in relations between the nomads to prevent possible attacks on their borders, disputes broke out between them and Chinggis Khan in 1211. Thus, Chinggis Khan went against them when the Jin ruler demanded tribute, which was not unusual because the ruler of Jin still considered Chinggis Khan one of his vassals. Chinggis Khan sent Jebe, one of his greatest generals, from the western side while he approached them from the eastern side. Jebe took the passage of Chabchiyal and attacked the Jin capital Zhongdu (modern Beijing). The Mongols conquered all the lands they passed until they went to the capital city. However, Jebe could not claim the capital, so he attacked them again when they were unprepared and captured the capital city.

Eventually, Jin gave tribute to the Mongols to avoid further damages, including valuable booty as many as their horses could carry and a princess as a bride. Satisfied, Chinggis Khan accepted their submission and left in peace. Chinggis Khan always avoided excessive and unnecessary actions. He knew that his army was still not fully organized to take a big city with fortifications, so he seized bountiful booties and left Jin lands by leaving garrisons in here.<sup>93</sup> On his way, he took submission from the Tangut, and then returned to his camp on Sa'ari Steppe.

In 1214, Jin decided to move the capital city to Kaifeng, a safer location against the Mongol attacks. However, the Mongols attacked Chinese territory again because the relocation of the capital was a violation of their agreement. They surrounded Zhongdu (modern Beijing), but were unable to claim it because of the storm. Since Chinggis Khan was a persistent person, he waited until the people inside

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<sup>93</sup> Allsen, Thomas, *The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China*, 352.

the fortifications felt exhausted. Chinese people turned to cannibalism after a month of resistance, but they surrendered in May 1215. After Jin was defeated and the Mongols gained lots of booty in this siege, Chinggis Khan had expanded his influence throughout northern China.

In 1218, Chinggis Khan turned his focus to other lands and sent envoys to the west. However, the governor of Otrar, a dependant of Khwarazm Shahs, slew the envoy, thus a battle between Chinggis Khan and the Khwarazm Shahs began.

At that time, Yisüi Qatun advised him to appoint a successor who would govern the nation after him since he was aging. Chinggis Khan held a meeting to choose an heir, yet, some people who attended the meeting, especially Chaghatay, opposed Jochi's candidacy. Jochi was the eldest son of Chinggis Khan, but there were doubts as to whether his father was Chinggis Khan or a Merkid.<sup>94</sup> The second eldest son, Chaghatay was not considered fit as the future head of the empire because of his short-tempered nature. Finally, Chinggis Khan decided that Ögödei, his third eldest son, would be the most reliable heir. Although Ögödei's succession is described like this in *The Secret History*, according to *Jami' al-tawarikh*, Chinggis Khan appointed Ögödei as his heir when he was on his deathbed.<sup>95</sup> Either way, choosing an heir was a new concept in Mongolian tradition. Until now, the new ruler was chosen by the joint decision of the *quriltai*, but as of now, Chinggis Khan was changing the Inner Asian society and constituted his order by establishing a centralized state and becoming the sole authority, although the *quriltai* continued to exist.

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<sup>94</sup> Börte was pregnant with Jochi when she was rescued from the Merkid. Thus, we do not know whether his father was Chinggis Khan or a Merkid.

<sup>95</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 2, 262.

Before challenging the Khwarazm Shahs, Chinggis Khan sent envoys to the Tangut to receive their help in this battle as the right-wing of the army. However, they rejected the envoys and claimed that Chinggis Khan was incompetent to proceed alone. Chinggis Khan was furious, but he decided to deal with them later. In 1219, he set out against the Khwarazm Shahs and began the campaigns in Central Asia.

After Güchülüg of the Naiman and the Qara Kitai were exterminated in 1218, the balance of power in the region (most of the modern Xinjiang and Kyrgyzstan) was unstable. Therefore, it became easier for Chinggis Khan to advance westward and spread his power here. Now, the Mongol Empire had a direct borderline with the most dominant Muslim administration in the eastern Islamic world, the Empire of the Kwarazm Shah.

#### 2.2.4 Otrar incident (1218) and conquest of Central Asia

Earlier upon hearing the fame of a ruler who became so powerful in the east and had victories in China, in 1215, Muhammad Khwarazm Shah had sent an envoy to Chinggis Khan with the intention of knowing him better. At that time, Chinggis Khan welcomed the envoys, as he wanted to develop trade relations between east and west Asia. In return for Kwarazm Shah's gesture to improve relations between the two administrations, Chinggis Khan had sent three Muslim men as ambassadors to strengthen their relationship and connections between trade routes in Asia.

According to the message Chinggis Khan sent with the ambassadors, Chinggis Khan addressed Muhammad Khwarazm Shah as his dearest son. This phrase may have

sounded offensive and caused a conflict between them, but Muhammad Khwarazm Shah was indifferent and agreed to strengthen the trade routes together.

After the agreement, in 1218, Chinggis Khan sent the caravan mentioned above to Khwarazm. Unfortunately, when they arrived at Otrar, which was on their eastern frontier, the local governor, a relative of the Shah, accused the merchants of being spies, confiscated their goods, and killed them. Although killing merchants was an act of war, Chinggis Khan stated that he would forgive them in exchange for killing the governor of Otrar and returning the seized goods to him. However, Khwarazm Shah ignored this diplomatic solution, killed one of the envoys, insulted the others by cutting their beards, and started a war against the Mongol Empire. It was a *casus belli* and the catalyzer of the campaigns of Central Asia.

It is known that the merchants worked as spies on many occasions, but it is unclear whether the Mongol merchants had ulterior motives. Chinggis Khan wanted to improve his relations with the Khwarazm Shahs and build trade relations with the west. After this incident, Chinggis Khan remained calm and stated that he would not start a war in return. However, the Khwarazm Shahs killed his ambassadors, who brought them this message.

In 1219, Chinggis Khan appointed a successor, prepared a composite army familiar with the region,<sup>96</sup> and went to Otrar. He divided the army into as follows; Ögödei and Chaghatay went to Otrar, Jochi went down the Jaxartes River to reach Khwarazm, and Chinggis Khan and Tolui went to Bukhara. At the conquest of Central Asia, Chinggis Khan utilized his organized army and showed the world what he could do with the support of loyal and skillful people regardless of their social

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<sup>96</sup> Tarim basin population consisted of northern Chinese, Khitan, Uighur, Qarluqs, etc.

status. Chinggis Khan's army conquered vast lands by crossing the borders and destroying the city walls.

Muhammad Kwarazm Shah's army outnumbered the Mongols; yet, he made a strategic mistake and divided his troops into garrisons at his principal towns, then focused on the fortifications. After five months of combat, Otrar was occupied, and the people were massacred in retaliation for the caravan incident. During that time, Chinggis Khan traveled to Bukhara via Qızıl Qum desert instead of the usual route via Samarqand to catch them off guard. However, he would not forgive anyone who resisted him and harmed his state or people. He invaded and destroyed it in early 1220.<sup>97</sup> After the invasions, skillful men, like artisans, were brought to the east to serve the Mongols, women became slaves, and young men became servants as "arrow fodder"<sup>98</sup> for future battles. When Chinggis Khan conquered a place, he rarely touched the local people because he wanted to gather as many people as possible under his rule, and they were more valuable as a workforce such as soldiers, slaves, and artisans. For this reason, he did not commit great massacres as long as he did not encounter resistance.

Muhammad Khawarazm Shah ran away westward, so Chinggis Khan sent his commanders and then went to the capital Samarqand. In May-June 1220, the Mongols took Samarqand without harming anyone because they surrendered without resistance. The Mongols plundered and destroyed the walls, and just as they did in Bukhara, they categorized the people according to their skills. In the meantime, Tolui invaded Khurasan and took very harsh measures against the people who resisted. With this campaign, almost all Transoxania came under the rule of Chinggis Khan.

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<sup>97</sup> Biran, Michal, *Chinggis Khan: Makers of the Muslim World*, 57.

<sup>98</sup> Biran, Michal, *Chinggis Khan: Makers of the Muslim World*, 57-58.

After the Mongols exterminated the Empire of the Khwarazm, they opened the Oxus dikes to wash out the remains of Urgench. When Jochi and Chaghatay went northward to defeat the Qipchak tribes who were allies of the Khwarazm Shahs, the Mongol commanders were after Muhammad Khwarazm Shah. Despite finding him dead<sup>99</sup> on a small island in the Caspian Sea, the commanders did not return until 1223 and went until the Russian steppe, the Caucasus, and Azerbaijan to expand the influence of the Mongol Empire.

Muhammad's son and rightful heir, Jalal al-Din Khwarazm Shah, escaped to Khurasan, gathered many followers in Gazna, and met with Chinggis Khan on the banks of the Indus River in 1221. Although he fought well, he could not win against the Mongols and escaped into different regions such as India and Azerbaijan. Consequently, the Mongols never ceased chasing him until he died near Maragha in Azerbaijan in 1231. Now, the Mongols had control over Central Asia, the center of the transcontinental interaction.

#### 2.2.5 Chinggis Khan's death (1227)

After the campaigns in Central Asia, the Tangut withdrew their troops and left the Mongols alone against Jin Dynasty in 1223. Chinggis Khan was already outraged with the Tangut because they did not help when the Mongols were fighting against Khwarazm Shah. Now, they were leaving them alone on the battlefield again. However, Chinggis Khan was generous to them and tried to resolve this dispute diplomatically by sending a message saying that he would forgive them if the Tangut ruler sent his son as a hostage to the Mongol court. Nevertheless, the Tangut did not

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<sup>99</sup> It is recorded that he died either by heart break or pneumonia.

submit and signed a peace treaty with the Jin Dynasty.<sup>100</sup> For years, the Jin Dynasty had been fighting against the Mongol troops in the north and the Song dynasty in the south. The Jin probably wanted to reduce the difficulty of fighting on two fronts, and therefore, agreed to a deal with the Tangut.

The Mongols approached the Tangut from their westside and took the cities one by one in the spring of 1226. In August 1227, when they surrounded the capital of Xi Xia, Chinggis Khan fell ill and died of an unknown cause. Nonetheless, to fulfill his last wish, the Mongols continued the campaign without disclosing the news about the death of their ruler. In September 1227, the Mongols took the capital and destroyed the city with the people inside.

According to the Mongol custom, Chinggis Khan was buried in a secret place high in the mountains. Today, there are many speculations about his death and his tomb. For instance, as stated by a common legend, to keep his burial place secret, every person who attended the funeral was killed regardless of his or her social status.

Whatever the truth about his death is, it is undeniable that Chinggis Khan's territories, influence, and image increased after the conquest of Central Asia. He destroyed many cities and lives, but he also built a network on an enormous scale by securing intercontinental trade and transportation. By conquering different regions and bringing multicultural people under his rule, Chinggis Khan created a secure network across borders and helped mobilize talented people, goods, knowledge, innovations, technology, and much more.

Today, although there are many studies on the Mongol Empire and Chinggis Khan's military achievements, however, studies on his life and perception are very

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<sup>100</sup> Biran, Michal, *Chinggis Khan: Makers of the Muslim World*, 61.

few. For this reason, in this study, I presented the perception of Chinggis Khan in major primary sources through examining his fair and harsh policies while looking for the methods of reconciliation of his perception. After demonstrating his life from birth to death, I introduce *The Secret History*, *Jami' al-tawarikh*, and *Yuan Shi*, *Chapter 1*, and the conflicting information they preserve in the following chapters.



## CHAPTER 3

### *THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS*

#### 3.1 Composition of *The Secret History of the Mongols*

*The Secret History of the Mongols* was written for the Mongol royal family in the Mongolian language by an anonymous author(s). It starts with the legends on Chinggis Khan's genealogy and the origin of the Mongols, and then presents Chinggis Khan's life from his birth<sup>101</sup> to his death, mostly chronologically. Then, it ends with narratives on the compilation of *The Secret History* after providing information about the succession of Ögödei, Chinggis Khan's third son.

*The Secret History of the Mongols* is the first and the most important written document of Mongol history. As a Medieval Chinese / Mongolian record, it is a complex work consisting of aspects of different cultures. The only surviving written version of this source is the transliteration of Chinese characters, which was in the Uighur script of the 13th century. It is written in the form that also includes epic poetry, combining fact and fiction simultaneously. In this respect, some scholars see it as a biased historical record,<sup>102</sup> and some of them do not view it as a historical source by any means due to its inauthenticity and narrative historiographic style. In order to study this source, one must be well acquainted with the languages, histories, official historiography methods, along with the political history and cultures of Mongolia and China. Fortunately, all available translations of this work have been

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<sup>101</sup> His birthday is a controversial issue. It differs from 1155 to 1167. Rashid al-Din says Temüjin was born in 1155 while *The Secret History* says he was born in 1162. On the other hand, *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* says he was born in 1161. In this paper, I did not highlight a date and stated it as the mid-12th century.

<sup>102</sup> Such as A. Waley and O. Hidehiro.

published by experts of Mongol studies, and this source has been translated into English four times until the present day.

In this chapter, I have revealed the perception of Chinggis Khan in *The Secret History*, a medieval source written from the Mongolian point of view. To do this, I used *The Secret History* translated in 2004 by I. de Rachewiltz, a historian and philologist on Mongol studies. Additionally, I used the translation of it by U. Onon, who translated it in 2001, and is a Mongol historian who specialized in Mongol studies and the history of Inner Asia. In this way, I sought an answer to my research question: What was the perception of Chinggis Khan in *The Secret History*? How were his fair and harsh policies reconciled here? What were the similarities and differences of his perception from other medieval sources I examined in this thesis?

In general, it is safe to say that *The Secret History* provides the most detailed information about Chinggis Khan's life and the Mongol Empire while presenting events not mentioned in other major primary sources. There are different opinions on *The Secret History of the Mongols* since it is a continuous work with some gaps between events and additional sections.<sup>103</sup> When, by whom, how, and why it was compiled is still an ongoing debate, and scholars still have not come to a consensus answering these questions. Thereupon, these issues are discussed in detail under the subheadings of this chapter before presenting the reconciliation of Chinggis Khan's fair and harsh policies in this source.

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<sup>103</sup> de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, xxvii.

### 3.1.1 Time of the composition

Due to lack of conclusive evidence and editorial changes during the Yuan and Ming dynasties,<sup>104</sup> scholars have not been able to reach a consensus on the date of the compilation of *The Secret History*. When the Mongols were in power in China, the original text of *The Secret History* was probably held here because it was a secret source and only royal family members were allowed to see it, thus, very few people had access to it.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, a copy of *The Secret History* reached China sometime between 1368 and 1382.<sup>106</sup> Then, during the Ming dynasty, a complete translation of the text was made, and the only surviving copy of it was published in 12 chapters and 282 sections under the name of *The Secret History of the Mongols of the Yuan Dynasty* (元朝秘史 *Yuanchao Mishi*) and a subtitle of *Mongqolun niqucha to(b)cha'an* (Secret History of the Mongols).

The following citation from *The Secret History* is helping us to narrow down the compiling date of this source, although it is not providing us the exact date:

The writing was completed at the time when the Great Assembly convened and when, in the Year of the Rat, in the month of the Roebuck, the palaces were established at Dolo'an Boldaq of Köde'e Aral on the Kerülen between two Shilginchek and ... (de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 218, § 282)<sup>5</sup>

According to I. de Rachewiltz, the Roebuck (*quran sara*) is the seventh month of the lunar calendar (2-31 August),<sup>107</sup> yet, there are different opinions about the reference of the year of the Rat (*Quluqana jil*) since we are not certain which year of the Rat it could be composed. It could indicate 1228, 1240, 1252, 1264, 1276, or the following

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<sup>104</sup> de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 33.

<sup>105</sup> T. May suggested that the name of *The Secret History* comes from the idea that it was only meant for the eyes of the Mongols in May, Timothy, *Culture and Customs of Mongolia*, 64.

<sup>106</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 25.

<sup>107</sup> de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, xxxiii.

twelve years. Therefore, scholars offer different dates for the compilation of this work (Appendix B).

It is persuasive that the leading scholars on Mongolian studies and the translators of *The Secret History* into English<sup>108</sup> believe that it was written in 1228, right after Chinggis Khan died, due to the political situation of the Mongol Empire at that time. They believe that 1228 is the most suitable year for writing the history of the Mongols because, as Onon suggested, there were no major internal or external problems.<sup>109</sup> However, we cannot rule out other possibilities, as there were no substantial problems within the Mongol Empire.

When we look at the Ilkhanids, *Jami' al-tawarikh* was written by the command of Ghazan Khan to preserve the history and identity of the Mongols while they were struggling because of internal and external problems which are explained in Chapter 4. Contrarily, *Yuan Shi* was written during the Ming Dynasty to preserve the history of the Yuan Dynasty for the sake of legitimacy according to Chinese historical tradition and China. When they were writing *Yuan Shi*, the Ming Dynasty was also struggling with many problems, which are explained in Chapter 5. Since political problems do not always interfere with scholarly studies, we should consider the other recommendations for the compilation date of *The Secret History* unless there is evidence to the contrary. Since the events mentioned in *The Secret History* are very detailed and probably written by someone close to the Mongol royal family, if we consider the historical memory, I believe that this work was presumptively not written decades after Chinggis Khan's death, frankly after 1252. Although there are many suggestions regarding the date of its composition, it remains a mystery, as it is difficult for us to know with our current knowledge.

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<sup>108</sup> F. W. Cleaves, I. de Rachewiltz, U. Onon.

<sup>109</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 18.

### 3.1.2 Authorship

The author of *The Secret History* is another mystery about the composition of this record. When we view the detailed information about the ruling family of the Mongol Empire and Chinggis Khan, we can assume that the author was close or related to the royal family. In this respect, U. Onon claims that the author belonged to the clan of Chinggis Khan, the Borjigin because only a member of a clan could know the affairs of that clan in detail.<sup>110</sup>

Considering the fact that *The Secret History* is a continuous work as additions were made in later periods, it is a great challenge to identify the author or authors of this source. According to I. de Rachewiltz, there are three possible candidates as an author. The first candidate Tata Tonga (Tatar Tola fl. 1204) was the former Uighur seal-keeper of Tayang Khan of the Naiman. He became the seal-keeper and tutor of Chinggis Khan's sons alongside other young members of the clan after the Naiman defeated. The second candidate Chingqai (ca.1169-1252) was the well-known Kerait or Uighur dignitary under the reign of Chinggis Khan, Ögödei, and Güyüg. The last candidate, and the most convincing one among others,<sup>111</sup> Shigi Qutuqu (ca. 1180-1260), was the adopted son of Chinggis Khan and one of his most trusted men who held top positions in the administration and the army, along with working as a judge since 1206.

On the other hand, W. Hung thinks it was written by an imaginary slave/officer who served the Chinggis Khan's family and experienced most of the events himself, as the author was more interested in the experiences of the women

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<sup>110</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 21.

<sup>111</sup> Considering his political and scholarly background as well as his relation with the Mongol royal family, I believe he could be the most likely candidate among others. However, we can not go beyond estimation with our current information due to the scarcity of sources.

and children in the Mongol royal family rather than the conquests of foreign lands.<sup>112</sup> Although *The Secret History* gives valuable information about the lives of the women and children in Chinggis Khan's family, it is hard to support W. Hung's suggestion since many chapters of this source cover the battles that Chinggis Khan fought while there is a whole chapter that covers the establishment of the empire and imperial guard system.<sup>113</sup> Even though there were other suggestions for authorship,<sup>114</sup> it is hard to identify the author or authors with our current information, and we can only make assumptions until the emergence of new evidence.

### 3.1.3 The process of the composition

Regarding the studies on *The Secret History of the Mongols* by many scholars such as A. Hung, I. de Rachewiltz, F. W. Cleaves, L. Ligeti, and others, we can draw a general framework of the writing process of this source. After the Mongols defeated the Naiman, they began to use the Uighur script in 1204, and then wrote *The Secret History*. It was composed without a title for the members of the imperial clan to inform them about old administrations. Furthermore, it provides information about the oral tradition and written works of Chinggis Khan's life and the Mongol Empire.

After the manuscript of *The Secret History* was completed at Köde'e Aral, we do not know what happened to it until some of the copies reappeared at the beginning of the Ming Dynasty while composing *Yuan Shi*. To compile a record of past administrations, all written sources were collected and a draft in Mongolian was prepared by the *Department of National History*. The first written version of *The*

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<sup>112</sup> Hung, William, "The Transmission of The Book Known as The Secret History of the Mongols," 486-487.

<sup>113</sup> Chapter nine of *The Secret History*.

<sup>114</sup> L. N. Gumilev believes that the author was a member of the "Old Mongolian Party"

*Secret History* was in Uighur script, and the manuscript did not have a formal title.<sup>115</sup>

Therefore, it has been given different names in time such as *Tobciyan*, *History*, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, *The Life of Chinggis Qahan*, *The True Record of Chinggis Qahan*, and *The Secret History of the Yuan Dynasty*.<sup>116</sup>

When the Yuan Dynasty collapsed in 1368, a history commission supervised by Song Lian (1310-81) started to compile *Yuan Shi* (*History of Yuan Dynasty*), which is discussed in detail in Chapter 5, under the Ming Dynasty. However, they did not fully utilize the archive materials of the Yuan Dynasty and finished it in a short time. During the compilation, they found the untitled record in the secret archives of the Yuan Dynasty, and then named it *Yuan bi-shi* or *Secret History of the Yuan* in Chinese and *Mongghol-un niucha tobchiyan* in Mongolian. Afterward, *The Secret History* became one of the primary sources of new works such as a Sino-Mongolian glossary named *Huayi yiyu* that is *Sino Foreign (Mongolian) Vocabulary*, which was prepared in 1389,<sup>117</sup> after seven years of work by the Ming Dynasty.

Phonetic transcription of *The Secret History*, which uses Chinese characters to represent Mongolian sounds, is hard to achieve. Since the fundamental goal of the translators was linguistic, translating the Mongolian text into Chinese, they did not intervene in *The Secret History* itself. Thus, they paid no attention to chronology, context, and historical accuracy.<sup>118</sup> If they did not know the meaning of a word, they left it untranslated, then continued to translate the rest of the text.

Its first ten *juan* (chapter) is about Chinggis Khan's ancestors, his life, and his career in Mongolia. The last two *juan* or *shuji* (supplementary collection) 1 and 2 covers his foreign campaigns and death, then gives brief information about the

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<sup>115</sup> de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, vii.

<sup>116</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 17.

<sup>117</sup> de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 1.

<sup>118</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), xlvii-xlviii.

beginning of the succession of Ögödei. Fortunately, 41 leaves of the printed edition of *The Secret History* and some of the printed text of *Huayi yiyu* were discovered in Peking Palace in 1933.

The first translation of *The Secret History* into a European language was by Archimandrite Palladius (Pyotr Ivanovich Kafarov), a Russian sinologist who found the Chinese translation of it in Peking Palace in 1866.<sup>119</sup> Palladius published this translation under the title of *Starinnoe Mongol'skoe skazanie o Chingis-Khane* in 1866. Then he found the second edition of *The Secret History* in Hanlin-yuan Palace in 1872 in three editions: Mongolian text that was written in Chinese characters, Chinese translations that were written under Mongolian words, and Chinese translation of the Mongolian text. After that, *Altan Tobchi* was discovered in the Mongolian People's Republic in 1926, and then published by Harvard University Press in 1952. After it was introduced to the west, many scholars (Appendix C) started to show interest in *The Secret History* to study the Mongol Empire, Chinggis Khan, the history of Asia in the 12th-13th centuries, and the historiography style of the Mongols.

Today, *The Secret History* has been translated into different languages and examined by many scholars. However, we still do not know when, by who, and how it was compiled, but only make assumptions based on available sources. Conversely, we can understand the reason for the compilation of this source by looking at its content, language, and the events it emphasizes or ignores. In this context, in the next part, I presented the opinions of different scholars about the reason for the compilation of *The Secret History*.

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<sup>119</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 23.

#### 3.1.4 The reason of the composition

In *The Secret History*, it is possible to find information about Mongol tribal life and society in the 12th-13th centuries, the personal life and career of Chinggis Khan, the daily life of nomads, the historiography of the Mongol Empire, and notions about various subjects such as cities, technology, language, and geography. According to many scholars, the main reason for the composition of *The Secret History* was to record the daily life of the Borjigin clan, especially Chinggis Khan.<sup>120</sup> It also covers the experiences and ruling traditions of the old administrations, and then passes this information on to the new rulers and members of the clan. In this way, the author(s) aimed to inform future rulers of the empire and to help them strengthen the state administration.

Additionally, C.P. Atwood says the primary purpose of writing this book was to show how the empire was established within a family and explain how the relations between mother and sons, along, sons and brothers affect state affairs.<sup>121</sup> Atwood's proposal is noteworthy because after the death of Chinggis Khan there were disagreements among his descendants. It is possible that family relations and state affairs were emphasized during the editorial changes made by the Yuan Dynasty after the Mongol Empire's succession to the Tolui lineage after many conflicts.<sup>122</sup> Therefore, along with the idea of informing the future rulers, Atwood's suggestion stands out as one of the main reasons for the compilation of *The Secret History*.

As a result, after examining the time, author(s), compilation process, and reason for compilation of this work, we can analyze Chinggis Khan's fair and harsh

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<sup>120</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 26.

<sup>121</sup> Atwood, Christopher, "How The Secret History of the Mongols was Written," 50.

<sup>122</sup> For further information please look at Jackson, Peter. "The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire."

policies in an improved way, then identify why it is different or similar from other major primary sources. To avoid repetitions, I will cover the content and historical background of other primary sources in chapters four and five, then compare and criticize all sources in chapter six. Thus, we can have a comprehensive understanding of the perception of Chinggis Khan in these sources and find an answer to the research question of this thesis, how his fair and harsh policies are reconciled in major primary sources.



## CHAPTER 4

### *JAMI' AL-TAWARIKH*

#### 4.1 Composition of *Jami' al-tawarikh*

The Ilkhanate period is considered the best period for Persian historiography.<sup>123</sup> As one of the most valuable works written in this period, *Jami' al-tawarikh* was compiled by Rashid al-Din, one of the utmost scholars and the vizier of the Ilkhanate Empire, and his assistants in Rab'-i-Rashidi<sup>124</sup> by the command of Ghazan Khan and Öljeitü in the 14th century. *Jami' al-tawarikh* gives information about the genealogy of the ruling dynasty of the Mongols, Chinggis Khan's life, and the history of various nations whom they had contact. For this purpose, the compilers used both historical and contemporaneous written works and oral sources from various informants. Therefore, many scholars<sup>125</sup> regarded this text as the first world history (Appendix, D).

In this chapter, I have revealed the perception of Chinggis Khan in the second part of the first tome of *Jami' al-tawarikh*, a medieval source written from the Ilkhanids and Persian point of view. To do this, I used the translation of W.M. Thackston, an American Orientalist, in 1998. In this way, I analyzed the perception of Chinggis Khan via reconciliation of his fair and harsh policies here and presented the similarities and differences of his perception from *The Secret History* and *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*.

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<sup>123</sup> Blair, Sheila, "The Ilkhanid Palace," 239.

<sup>124</sup> Also known as Rab'-e Rashidi.

<sup>125</sup> Such as J.A. Boyle, W. Thackston, and S. Kamola.

As one of the most valuable resources containing the official history of the Ilkhanate Empire and magnificent illustrations of Iranian art, *Jami' al-tawarikh* prevails as a very significant work. The Ilkhanate Empire, as descendants of Chinggis Khan from Central Asia, kept their Mongol identity alive and passed on the perception of Chinggis Khan to the next generations by compiling *Jami' al-tawarikh*. The Ilkhanate helped us to understand Chinggis Khan, but as I see since they were affected by the state structure, culture, and language of the local Persians, they presented Chinggis Khan in a different way than *The Secret History of the Mongols* and *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*, even though it has a generally positive perception. In consequence, *Jami' al-tawarikh* tells the history of the Mongols from the beginning until the reign of Öljeitü and reflects the intellectual side and imperial views of the Mongols of the medieval period. In the following parts, the compilation process of the work, its author, the place where it was compiled, and the reason for compilation are presented in detail.

#### 4.1.1 The process of the composition

Mahmud Ghazan Khan (r. 1295-1304), the sixth ruler of the Ilkhanate Empire, had good relations with Qubilai, the Great Khan of the Mongol Empire in China, but dealt with rebellions and the constant threat of the Mamluks, Ögödeids, and Chaghadaids in Central Asia. After a couple of decades had passed since the foundation of the state, Mongolian traditions and the culture of locals of Persian lands were relatively integrated. The state was undergoing difficult times in military and administrative terms due to internal and external issues. At that time, as a royal member of the Mongol Empire and the ruler of the Ilkhanate Empire, Ghazan Khan

ordered the compilation of the history of Chinggis Khan, his ancestors, and his offspring to preserve his legacy and probably, as Melville suggested, the Mongol identity.<sup>126</sup> In this respect, he appointed Rashid al-Din, who started his career as a court physician and became a vizier in 1298, to compile a history of the Mongols. Rashid al-Din was highly interested in intellectual studies<sup>127</sup> and had the competence to write *Jami' al-tawarikh*.

Ghazan Khan died when *Jami' al-tawarikh* was nearing completion in 1304, however his brother Muhammad Khodabandeh Öljeitü (r. 1304-1316), who took his place, ordered the book to be expanded<sup>128</sup> by adjoining the history of all the people around the world in Ghazan Khan's name. Therefore the official name of the tome one is *Tarikh-i Mubarak-i Ghazani*, and the entire work, including the appendixes, was completed in 710 (1310-11).<sup>129</sup> As a result, the work that is regarded as the first world history came into emergence.

As a result of the good relations between the Ilkhanate Empire and the Great Khan in China, the Mongols had access to various information regarding the cultures across Eurasia. When the Mongol Empire ensured the security of trade routes and transportation, people and their knowledge traveled between the continents more comfortably, and the Persians lived one of their most glorious periods in historiography and art. It is possible to see this in the illustrations of *Jami' al-tawarikh*, the writing process, the sources, and the author himself.

We can see how meticulous and intelligent the author is when we look at the compilation process of the text, the sources, and the language. As mentioned, Rashid

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<sup>126</sup> Melville, Charles, "Jāme' al-tawāriḫ." It was also printed in Volume XIV, Fascicle 5, pp. 462-468.

<sup>127</sup> Some of his books are as follows *Favaid-i Sultaniyya* (Royal Deductions), *As'ila u Ajviba* (Questions and Answers), *Mukatabat-i Rashidi* (Letter of Rashid al-Din).

<sup>128</sup> Robinson, "Rashid al-Din's World History: The Significance of the Miniatures," 217.

<sup>129</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, xiv.

al-Din was very interested in intellectual studies and wrote on many theoretical and theological subjects aside from the *Jami' al-tawarikh*. It is quite convincing, therefore, for Melville to say that he had gathered material before being requested to write the history of the Mongols.<sup>130</sup>

As the vizier of the Ilkhanate Empire, Rashid al-Din had access to the secret imperial archive,<sup>131</sup> possessed power and connections to find the contemporary sources of different nations, and had close ties with intellectuals of the members of the Ilkhanate court who provided him oral histories.<sup>132</sup> Correspondingly, he received information from Bolad Cheng Xiang,<sup>133</sup> Yuan ambassador in Iran appointed by the Great Khan Qubilai, as a source of the Mongol history. He also used Ata-Malik Juwayni's *Tarikh-i Jahangushay* (*The History of the World Conqueror*) to write Chinggis Khan's life and the Mongols, and Ibn al-Athir's *al-Kamil fi't-tarikh* (*The Complete History*) to write the history of the Islamic world, although he does not mention their names in *Jami' al-tawarikh*.<sup>134</sup>

Rashid al-Din built a charitable institution named Rab'-i-Rashidi in Tabriz in August 1309,<sup>135</sup> then compiled and made copies of his works, including *Jami' al-tawarikh*, in the scriptorium<sup>136</sup> in here with talented scribes of the Ilkhanids. He made copies of *Jami' al-tawarikh* in Persian and Arabic every year, then delivered them to principal libraries of the Mongol Empire to distribute and preserve his work for years.<sup>137</sup> Rashid al-Din was wealthy because he was a statesman in the court and had

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<sup>130</sup> Melville, Charles, "Jāme' al-tawāriḡ."

<sup>131</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 18.

<sup>132</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 6.

<sup>133</sup> Melville, Charles, "Jāme' al-tawāriḡ." Zeki Velidi Togan says Pulad Jinksank (Togan, Z.V. "The Composition of the History of the Mongols by Rashid al-Din," 60.). For further information look at Allsen, Thomas, "Biography of a Cultural Broker: Bolad Ch'eng-Hsiang in China and Iran."

<sup>134</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, xiv.

<sup>135</sup> Blair, Sheila, "Rab'-e Rašidi."

<sup>136</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, xii; Robinson, "Rashid al-Din's World History: The Significance of the Miniatures," 213; Blair, Sheila, "Rab'-e Rašidi."

<sup>137</sup> Allen, Terry, "Byzantine Sources for the Jāmi' al-tāwāriḡ of Rashīd Al-Dīn," 121.

a long career since he worked as a physician in the palace. As one of the khan's favorite men, his influence was also increasing, thus building a scriptorium or making copies of *Jami' al-tawarikh* every year was not difficult for him. Nevertheless, it is disappointing that very few copies are available today despite his efforts.

Zeki Velidi Togan also examined if *Jami' al-tawarikh* also had a “Mongolian first edition” and the contribution of Bolad Cheng Xiang in this version.<sup>138</sup> He explains how Bolad Cheng Xiang, ambassador of Qubilai and informant of Mongol history, and his assistants could be the compilers of this version, if it exists, without any contribution of Rashid al-Din himself. Since there is no original Mongolian text today, we cannot confirm or deny this information. However, we know that Rashid al-Din and other Persian scribes were not familiar with Mongolian terms and names; therefore, Z.V. Togan's suggestion about Rashid al-Din's contribution to it is worth considering.

Z.V. Togan also mentions that there could be a Uighur Turkic version of *Jami' al-tawarikh* and a part of it was seen by historian Shukrullah in the court library of the Qaraqoyunlu Jihanshah.<sup>139</sup> After Rashid al-Din's death, other contemporary versions have also emerged. For instance, one of the most famous versions is the Timurid version, which was written with additional parts by Hafiz-i Abru, the Timurid court historian.

When we look at the content of the book, we can see that Rashid al-Din used informative language to deliver the narratives of the histories. It allows the reader to understand the events better, as he connected the passages and told the events as he witnessed himself. Rashid al-Din and the Persian scribes he cooperated with worked

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<sup>138</sup> Togan, Zeki, “The Composition of the History of the Mongols by Rashid al-Din,” 66.

<sup>139</sup> Togan, Zeki, “The Composition of the History of the Mongols by Rashid al-Din,” 65.

meticulously in presenting the history of various nations and the emergence of the Mongol Empire, even though they were unfamiliar with the Mongolian language. They made it easier to understand the establishment process of the empire by giving detailed information about the legends of the Mongols, the history of their ancestors and other nations, and the geographical, social and political environment of medieval times. Accordingly, *Jami' al-tawarikh* remains to be one of the most significant products of Persian historiography. It is valuable in terms of the history of different nations until the 14th century, the life of Chinggis Khan, the history of the Mongols, Persian historiography, and paintings.

Although some scholars have different views on the compilation date of the work, it is commonly accepted, that it was written at the beginning of the 14th century. According to Thackston, the last date mentioned in *Jami' al-tawarikh* is 705 (1305-6), but the entire work, including the appendixes, was completed in 710 (1310-11). Correspondingly, Robinson believes that it was written in 1314 because the script was completed in the lifetime of both Öljeitü and Rashid al-Din.<sup>140</sup> This way, he gives Rashid al-Din less time than Thackston to finish the compilation and distribute the copies to the madrasas and libraries in Central Asia. However, only two copies were made each year, and there remain only a few copies today. Therefore, his suggestion seems unlikely. Additionally, T. Allen suggested a vague period by believing that Rashid al-Din completed it sometime between 706 and 710 A.H. (A.D. 1306 and 1311),<sup>141</sup> and he gave a similar explanation to Thackston.

Ultimately, due to the appointment of the scribes by the Ilkhanate rulers, the text needed to have a specific style of writing, which censored the negative attitudes and highlighted the positive ones. To examine the text from a more objective point of

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<sup>140</sup> Robinson, "Rashid al-Din's World History: The Significance of the Miniatures," 213.

<sup>141</sup> Allen, Terry, "Byzantine Sources for the *Jāmi' al-tāwārīkh* of Rashīd Al-Dīn," 121.

view and understand its perception of Chinggis Khan, we need to look at its author, where it was compiled, and the reason for its compilation. Since the sources used in the text and the compilation process are briefly explained, I will examine the author in the following part.

#### 4.1.2 Rashid al-Din Fadlallah

Rashid al-Din Fadlallah Tabib Hamadani (ca. 1247-1318) was of Jewish background, born in Hamadan, and then converted to Islam when he was thirty.<sup>142</sup> He began to work in the court as a physician, but Ghazan Khan favored him and appointed him as deputy vizier in 1298. He had rivals at court due to political competitions, and the fact that both khans loved him made people jealous and caused people to be harsh towards him. In this respect, Z.V. Togan states that although Rashid al-Din was a Muslim and his father may have already become a Muslim, his political rivals always questioned his faith in Islam by calling him a Jew, especially in the presence of Ghazan Khan and Öljeitü.<sup>143</sup> In the end, he was framed for poisoning Öljeitü and executed in 718 (1318-1319).<sup>144</sup>

According to S. Kamola, after Ghazan Khan converted to Islam and the Ilkhanids got more involved in Perso-Islamic society,<sup>145</sup> the historiography style and dynastic identity<sup>146</sup> of the Ilkhanids changed. Rashid al-Din, one of the most important figures of this change, was a member of a substantial Jewish community

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<sup>142</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, xii; Blair, Sheila, "Ilkhanid Palace," 239.

<sup>143</sup> Togan, Zeki, "The Composition of the History of the Mongols by Rashid al-Din," 60.

<sup>144</sup> Thackston says he died in 17th Jumada I 718 / July 17, 1318 (Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, xiv).

<sup>145</sup> Kamola, Stefan, *Rashid al-Din and the making of history in Mongol Iran*, 132.

<sup>146</sup> Kamola, Stefan, *Rashid al-Din and the making of history in Mongol Iran*, 133.

from northern Iran<sup>147</sup> and attracted to the Ilkhanate Empire, as they were welcoming scholars regardless of their ethnic background. After becoming one of Ghazan Khan's favorite officers, Rashid al-Din formed strong bonds, including joining him during the battle against the Mamluks and working on fiscal reforms.<sup>148</sup> Additionally, he and his sons were in high positions in the Ilkhanid government for years, thus he had enormous power and wealth through Central Asia.

As the compiler of *Jami' al-tawarikh*, his background, his motivation, and the methods he used to write this book allow us to interpret it better. As we can see in *Jami' al-tawarikh*, Rashid al-Din was well educated, well-versed in the language he used, and is knowledgeable about contemporaneous sources. His writing was indirect, instructive, and fancier than other major primary sources I used in this thesis, although in terms of Persian literature his language is very simple. Although he generally praised the Chinggisid family, he also expresses how the Mongols killed thousands of people who refused to submit, destroyed walls, and enslaved many people, especially when describing the conquest of the Muslim lands. Even though he might have felt closer to the people of the Muslim lands and presented the conquest of Central Asia from their point of view, it is remarkable that Rashid al-Din could write about unfavorable incidents while writing the history of the Mongols under the command of the Ilkhanate. He did this by speaking implicitly or saying that these events led to an increase in positive incidents in the future.

Although it is known that Rashid al-Din compiled this book with his assistants at Rab'-i-Rashidi, there are different ideas about the sources he used and the people he worked with. Abu'l-Qasim Kashani, who wrote the official biography

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<sup>147</sup> Kamola, Stefan, *Rashid al-Din and the making of history in Mongol Iran*, 110.

<sup>148</sup> Boyle, J. Andrew, "Rashid al-Din: The first world historian," 19.

of Öljeitü, was one of the scribes who wrote *Jami' al-tawarikh*.<sup>149</sup> Kashani claimed that he was the real author of *Jami' al-tawarikh* and Rashid al-Din stole his book. However, we know that *Jami' al-tawarikh* is a collective work, and they used various sources and informants to write this book. Since Rashid al-Din had the competence and access to the valuable sources to write it, there is no need to doubt his authorship.

He was a physician, historian, and statesman who had political power, wealth, and access to contemporary works and intellectuals. After he was appointed as a compiler of the *Jami' al-tawarikh*, he had access to secret archives of the court, including *The Secret History of the Mongols* and *Altan Debter*.<sup>150</sup> In this respect, Boyle suggests, since these sources are considered sacred, it is possible that Rashid al-Din did not read it directly but Bolad Cheng Xiang conveyed the contents of these books to him orally.<sup>151</sup> Rashid al-Din received help from Chinese, Mongolian and Persian experts, used contemporaneous sources from various nations, and included oral history by listening to stories from the scholars of the Ilkhanate court.<sup>152</sup> To write other parts of *Jami' al-tawarikh*, he referenced Juwayni, Ibn al-Athir, Biruni, Firdevsi's *Shahnama*, Martin of Troppau's history, and some Chinese manuscripts alongside oral sources from various informants.<sup>153</sup>

When Öljeitü died in 1316, and Sultan Abusa'id took the throne, Rashid al-Din had many disputes with his political rivals. He was dismissed from the court in September 1317 after being accused of different felonies,<sup>154</sup> yet, he still had

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<sup>149</sup> Blair, Sheila "The Ilkhanid Palace," 239.

<sup>150</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, xiv.

<sup>151</sup> Boyle, J. Andrew, "Rashid al-Din: The first world historian," 23.

<sup>152</sup> Melville, Charles, "Jāme' al-tawārik."

<sup>153</sup> Melville, Charles, "Jāme' al-tawārik."

<sup>154</sup> Thackston says it was around the end of the month of Rajab 717/September 1317 (Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, xiii); B.W. Robinson it was in October 1317 (Robinson, "Rashid al-Din's World History: The Significance of the Miniatures," 217.).

considerable influence and power. Therefore, Rashid al-Din and his son Khwaja Ibrahim, *sharbatdar* of the former khan, were executed on 17 July 1318,<sup>155</sup> when they were accused of poisoning Öljeitü. Afterward, including Rab'-i-Rashidi, all of their property was seized by the court. To fully understand the events behind this period, I examined the scriptorium of Rab'-i-Rashidi in the following part of this chapter.

#### 4.1.3 Scriptorium of Rab'-i-Rashidi

Rashid al-Din built Rab'-i-Rashidi as a complex with four functions of charity, commemoration, piety, and inheritance in Tabriz in August 1309.<sup>156</sup> This complex has not survived to the present day, but it is possible to learn its architecture and function from its endowment deed, *Vaqfnama-i Rab'-i Rashidi*. It also provides information about the duties and annual salaries of the employees and workers while giving us a glimpse into the social life in the Ilkhanate Empire.

In addition to having a city structure<sup>157</sup> where thousands of people from various cultures and regions live or work, Rab'-i-Rashidi had the most vital and fundamental components of the whole complex.<sup>158</sup> Rab'-i-Rashidi contained a hospice, hospital, pharmacy, mosques, a library, a classroom, a tomb complex, a bath, storerooms, fountains, and most importantly, a scriptorium to compile and copy Rashid al-Din's works, including *Jami' al-tawarikh*.<sup>159</sup> This complex had a form of a

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<sup>155</sup> Robinson says it was on 18th July 1318 (Robinson, "Rashid al-Din's World History: The Significance of the Miniatures," 217.); Thackston says 17th Jumada I 718/July 17, 1318 (Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, xiv).

<sup>156</sup> Blair, Sheila, "Rab'-e Rašidi."

<sup>157</sup> Özgüdenli, Osman G. "Bir İlhanlı şehir modeli: Rab'-i Reşidi'de meslekler, görevliler ve ücretler," 125.

<sup>158</sup> Özgüdenli, Osman G. "Bir İlhanlı şehir modeli: Rab'-i Reşidi'de meslekler, görevliler ve ücretler," 110.

<sup>159</sup> Blair, Sheila, "Rab'-e Rašidi."

city as it consisted of thousands of people from various cultures, regions, and occupations. When we look at the buildings in the complex, it is possible to learn about Rashid al-Din's character and interests. He was a physician who built a hospital and pharmacy, a scholar who built a library and scriptorium, and a benevolent person who founded a school for orphans. Consequently, he had the power and source to manage the place. Every year, he had made two copies of *Jami' al-tawarikh*, one in Persian and one in Arabic. Then, he sent them to madrasas across Muslim lands to inform scholars in different regions. Upon deliverance of the copies to various madrasas in Muslim lands, people could copy or borrow them by paying a security deposit.<sup>160</sup> Nevertheless, no matter how many precautions Rashid al-Din took and produced copies every year, only a few of them have survived to the present day.

After Rashid al-Din died in 1318, Rab'-i-Rashidi was plundered by Ilkhanate soldiers and his properties were confiscated by the court. Accordingly, the copying process of *Jami' al-tawarikh* has also ended. If we consider that *Jami' al-tawarikh* was completed in 710 (1310-11), Rashid al-Din only had seven or eight years to make copies. However, Thackston says they began to make copies in Rab-i Rashidi in Dhu'l-Hijja 713 (March 1314), so Rashid al-Din had four years to make copies. Today, only one Arabic manuscript in two fragments<sup>161</sup> and three Persian manuscripts<sup>162</sup> remained from Rashid al-Din's lifetime. There are also a few manuscripts and later versions of *Jami' al-tawarikh*, which are preserved in museums and academies around the world.

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<sup>160</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, xii.

<sup>161</sup> One of them is in the Khalili Collection, and the other one is in Edinburgh University Library (A.H. 714/A.D.1314).

<sup>162</sup> All of them are in Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi H.1653, dated 713 (1314); H.1654, dated 717 (1317); R.1518, dated 717 (1317). There is also an later Arabic version in Library of Süleymaniye (Ayasofya, nr. 3034).

Rab'-i-Rashidi was a charitable foundation modeled on Ghazan Khan's complex at Shanb-i-Ghazan in Tabriz.<sup>163</sup> After Rashid al-Din's death, his son Jalal al-Din took charge of Rab'-i-Rashidi,<sup>164</sup> probably after becoming a vizier in the Ilkhanate court in 1328. However, when he died in 1336, Rab'-i-Rashidi was plundered again, and no trace of it remains today.

After examining in detail the writing process of this book, the author, and the place where it was written, we also need to understand why it was written to have a comprehensive understanding of the perception of Chinggis Khan. Therefore, in the next part, the reason for the compilation of *Jami' al-tawarikh* is presented to reveal the methods of reconciliation of the fair and harsh policies of Chinggis Khan.

#### 4.1.4 The reason of the composition

After Chinggis Khan died in 1227 and divided the lands of the Mongol Empire among his sons, his descendants started to fight for the throne and the magnitude of the territories they had over time. As a consequence of the Toluids claiming the throne, the history of the Mongols and the origin of the primary sources changed since there is not many available sources from the Chaghataids or Ögödeids.<sup>165</sup> Ilkhanids and Rashid al-Din were on the victorious side of history, thus the reason for the compilation of *Jami' al-tawarikh* cannot be separated from the events of the period.

To understand the reason for the composition, we need to understand the perspective of the Ilkhanate rulers at that time. Under Ghazan Khan and Öljeitü's

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<sup>163</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, xi.

<sup>164</sup> Blair, Sheila, "Rab'-e Rašidi."

<sup>165</sup> Jackson, Peter, "The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire," 188-189.

reign, Ilkhanate Empire had good relations with the Yuan Dynasty but dealt with their political rivals in Central Asia. Unlike the Yuan dynasty, the Ilkhanate Empire was far from the Mongolian steppes and blended with the local culture, although they continued several nomadic Mongolian traditions. Thus, they had to preserve their Mongolian identity<sup>166</sup> against their internal and external rivals and display their legitimacy in Iran and Central Asia as Khans descended from Chinggis Khan.

Correspondingly, in addition to being interested in intellectual works and proving their legitimacy, the Ilkhanids probably felt the need to write a history of the ruling family and the emergence of the Mongol Empire. In addition, many scholars agree that this work was written to preserve the history of the Ilkhanids. In this regard, Thackston also claims that it was written to record the good deeds of Chinggis Khan and his descendants.<sup>167</sup> In this respect, the Ilkhanids provided information about the genealogy of the ruling dynasty by opening the secret archives, bringing informants around the world, and providing all resources Rashid al-Din needed.

As a result, this work was produced to provide political legitimacy to the Ilkhanids, taking into account the conditions of the realpolitik of the medieval period. More interestingly, one of the most significant features of this work is that a Jewish scholar who later became a Muslim wrote the life of Chinggis Khan and the history of the Mongols who conquered the Islamic lands. The perception of Chinggis Khan and Rashid al-Din's approach to the events are examined in detail in Chapter 6, after the presentation of *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* in the following chapter.

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<sup>166</sup> Melville, Charles, "Jāme' al-tawāriḵ."

<sup>167</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 9.

## CHAPTER 5

### *YUAN SHI, CHAPTER 1*

#### 5.1 Composition of *Yuan Shi*

*The History of Yuan Dynasty (Yuan Shi 元史)* was compiled by a history committee supervised by Li Shanchang and then Song Lian at the behest of Ming Taizu, Zhu Yuanzhang, in 1370.<sup>168</sup> As one of the twenty-four official dynastic histories in China, *Yuan Shi* was written in a specific style and order according to rules of Chinese historiography. Although it is an uncompleted and unreviewed work that was compiled in less than a year, in 331 days to be accurate,<sup>169</sup> it gives considerable substantial information about the Yuan Dynasty, the life of Chinggis Khan, the Mongol Empire, and the history of China.

*Yuan Shi* was written by using essential sources, majority of which have not survived today, and provides a better understanding of Chinggis Khan's life, image, and policies from the Chinese perspective. The compilers were familiar with the history of the Yuan Dynasty, as most of them had worked under the Yuan administration before.<sup>170</sup> After the compilers began to write *Yuan Shi* for many reasons presented in the following parts of this chapter, they managed to write it before long due to the available primary sources. However, many scholars began to criticize its authenticity as it was hastily written without revision before presenting to the throne, while some scholars claim otherwise. In this context, Wilkinson says not

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<sup>168</sup> C. P. Atwood published a complete translation of the first chapter of *Yuan Shi*, Chinggis Khan's biography, by comparing it with the available sources, and provided clarifications in the footnotes, which help us to analyze this source more effectively. Atwood, C.P. (2020). "The History of the Yuan, Chapter 1," *Mongolian Studies, The Journal of Mongolia Society*, Volume XXXIX.

<sup>169</sup> Mote, Frederick, *A note on traditional sources for Yüan History*, 690.

<sup>170</sup> Mote, Frederick, *A note on traditional sources for Yüan History*, 690.

revising *Yuan Shi* helps us to see the original or near-original state of many documents.<sup>171</sup> Similarly, F. Mote suggests that it was not polished as *Ming Shi*, *History of the Ming Dynasty* which has undergone many changes through ninety years, even if it lacks internal coherence.<sup>172</sup>

In this chapter, I have revealed the perception of Chinggis Khan in *Yuan Shi*, Chapter 1, annal-biography of Chinggis Khan, by using the publication of *Yuan Shi* by The Zhonghua Book Company (*Zhonghua shuju* 中華書局) in 1976. Then, I counterchecked the accuracy of the sections I used from the recent publication of C.P. Atwood. By doing that, I presented Chinggis Khan's perception via his fair and harsh policies by comparing them with *The Secret History of the Mongols* and *Jami' al-tawarikh*. Next, I examined how they were reconciled in Chapter 6. Before presenting the reconciliation of Chinggis Khan's fair and harsh policies, I examined the compilation process and reason for the compilation of this source in the following parts to understand *Yuan Shi*, Chapter 1 properly.

#### 5.1.1 The process of the composition

Official Chinese historiography emerged with the establishment of the Historiography Office by Tang Taizong, the second emperor of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), around AD 629-630.<sup>173</sup> The earlier written histories were regarded as literature. After they were written by individual authors, they were adopted as official histories, whereas Tang histories were commissioned. The Historiography Office became institutionalized and remained consistent for centuries, but the

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<sup>171</sup> Wilkinson, Endymion, *Chinese History, A Manual*, 836.

<sup>172</sup> Mote, Frederick, *A note on traditional sources for Yüan History*, 689.

<sup>173</sup> Togan, İsenbike, *Court Historiography in Early Tang China*, 176.

Chinese historiography techniques continued to change. According to the Chinese historiography tradition of writing the official history of the fallen dynasty by the new dynasty or the next one, scholars were assigned to write the history of the Yuan Dynasty by Ming Taizu in 1368.<sup>174</sup> These scholars were supervised by various people who worked as Ming politicians and historians as Li Shanchang, Song Lian (1310-1381), and Wang Wei (1322-1372).

The Ming emperor convened two commissions to write the official history of the Yuan Dynasty.<sup>175</sup> As explained in F. Mote's article, in 1369, Song Lian and assistant scribes compiled the history of the Yuan Dynasty up to the events of 1333, the beginning of the reign of Toghon Temür, the last emperor of the Yuan Dynasty. Then in 1370, a second commission convened under the supervision of Wang Wei, and they compiled the rest of the *Yuan Shi* up to the events of 1368.

Song Lian's *Yuan Shi* was printed in Nanjing in 1370 and then in the mid-16th century. The Commercial Press (*Shangwu yinshuguan* 商務印書館) published a modern edition (*bainaben Ershisi Shi* 百納本二十四史), but it has various printing errors, and it was not punctuated. Finally, The Zhonghua Book Company (*Zhonghua shuju* 中華書局) published another modern edition by comparing former editions in punctuation and correcting flaws in 1976. In this study, I used this edition to learn the events in the time of Chinggis Khan and have a better understanding of his image.

The annal-biographies of the first five emperors of the Yuan Dynasty were written at the command of Qubilai Khan, the founder of the Yuan Dynasty,<sup>176</sup> and they were kept in Yuan archives. In 1303, they were overhauled by the order of

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<sup>174</sup> Yang, Lien-Sheng, "The Organization of Chinese Official Historiography," 47.

<sup>175</sup> Mote, Frederick, *A note on traditional sources for Yüan History*, 690.

<sup>176</sup> Atwood, Christopher, "The History of the Yuan, Chapter 1," 3-4.

Temür Khan, successor and grandson of Qubilai,<sup>177</sup> and used by the compilers of *Yuan Shi* during Ming Dynasty. The compilers used these Veritable Records (Shi-lu 實錄) and other sources to compile the dynastic history of the Yuan administration including *The Secret History of the Mongols*, *Shengwu qinzheng lu* (Record of Personal Campaign of Holy Warrior), biographies of Yelü Ahai and Yelü Chucai,<sup>178</sup> and translated sources from Mongolian.

Additionally, standardized court materials of the Yuan Dynasty<sup>179</sup> were used, which allowed *Yuan Shi* to be completed in a short time. *Yuan Shi*, Chapter 1 has many errors and inaccurate information due to various reasons, but it preserves many valuable primary sources that have not survived today and remains one of the most valuable sources on the Yuan Dynasty, the Mongols, Chinggis Khan's life, perception, and policies.

#### 5.1.2 Context of *Yuan Shi*, Chapter 1

As accordance to the traditional Chinese annal style, *Yuan Shi* consists of 210 chapters (*juan* 卷) and four parts. The first part is imperial annal-biographies (*benji* 本紀), which present the events under each Yuan emperor, and normally follow a chronological order. The second part is treaties (*zhi* 志), which give information about the institutions of the Yuan Dynasty such as selection and appointment of officials, state offices, military, penal law, court rituals, and music. The third part is

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<sup>177</sup> Atwood, Christopher, "The History of the Yuan, Chapter 1," 4.

<sup>178</sup> Both of these biographies were translated by Geoff Humble.

<sup>179</sup> The Diary of Activity and Repose (*Qiju zhu* 起居注), Records of Current Government (*Shi zheng ji*), Daily Records (*Ri-li*), Veritable Records (*Shi-lu* 實錄), Collected Statutes (*Hui-Yao* 會要), State or National History (*Guo-Shi* 國史).

tables (*biao* 表), which present certain information in charts such as members of the imperial dynasty, empresses, and counselors-in-chief. Lastly, the fourth part is collective biographies (*liezhuan* 列傳), which contain biographies of exemplary people such as queens, princes, princesses, scholars, and statesmen. Overall, *Yuan Shi* has 47 *benji*, 58 *zhi*, 8 *biao*, and 97 *liezhuan*.

Even though *Yuan Shi*, Chapter 1 seems to have an objective point of view, the fact that it does not include certain events gives a clue about its objectivity and the perception of Chinggis Khan and the Mongols. Over time, numerous people attempted to write their own versions<sup>180</sup> by correcting the errors as they saw appropriate. However, Song Lian's *Yuan Shi* is the most significant source of the Yuan Dynasty and the presence of the Mongols in China in terms of the value of the resources it used and the period in which it was written.

The Yuan Dynasty, which dominated the lands of China for nearly a century, and the Ming Dynasty, which was established soon after, were influenced by local culture and changing historiographic techniques over time. Since orthodox Neo-Confucianism became a restrictive force for the Yuan and Ming dynasties,<sup>181</sup> official dynastic histories became more authoritarian and heavily censored as the compilers did not criticize or include a commentary section (*lun zan* 論贊) as former dynastic histories. The compilers, probably because they did not know Mongolian or were more interested in Chinese history than the history of the Mongols, have described some events in contradiction with each other and mentioned some names twice.

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<sup>180</sup> Zhu You's book titled *Yuanshi shiyi* (元史拾遺), and Xie Jin's book titled *Yuanshi zheng wu* (元史正誤) were written during the early Ming period. Then, Shao Yuanping's *Yuanshi leibian* (元史類編), Wei Yuan's *Yuanshi xinbian* (元史新編), Zeng Lian's *Yuanshu* (元書), Ke Shaomin's *Xin Yuanshi* (新元史), and Tu Ji's *Mengwu'er shiji* (蒙兀兒史記) were written during Qing period. They were listed in Mote, Frederick, *A note on traditional sources for Yüan History*.

<sup>181</sup> Yang, Lien-Sheng "The Organization of Chinese Official Historiography," 53.

When we look at the *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*, we can see that it did not elaborate much on the events under the Chinggis Khan period. It emphasizes the events that affected Chinese lands more than Chinggis Khan's policies in western lands. Additionally, unlike *The Secret History* and *Jami' al-tawarikh*, the compilers of this source have kept themselves outside of the events without showing any connection to the Mongols, although Ming Dynasty was geographically close to the Mongolian steppe and had direct access to sources of Chinggis Khan's descendants, the Yuan Dynasty. On this occasion, we can clearly see that the ethnic background of the Yuan Dynasty prevails them to be a part of the Han Chinese dynastic lineage. However, they ruled the Chinese lands for almost a century and possessed the power to provide political legitimacy to their successor dynasty. Consequently, the Ming Dynasty had to compile *Yuan Shi* in accordance with the official Chinese historiographic style. However, non-Han Chinese dynasties, Liao, Jin, and Yuan, were considered alien, bypassed from the Han-Chinese dynastic lineage, and led to questions about their political legitimacy.<sup>182</sup>

In accordance with the style of Chinese historiography, the compilers presented the events from the perspective of a third person, did not go into details, and did not comment on the events by only giving short anecdotes. It has more censorship than other sources but remains one of the most important medieval Chinese sources about Chinggis Khan, the Yuan Mongols, and the history of China.

Although *Yuan Shi* is condemned as a poorly compiled source as a part of the twenty-four official dynastic histories, it remains significant because of the primary sources it preserves and reflects the perception of Chinggis Khan from the Chinese viewpoint. The political situation of the newly established Ming Dynasty and their

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<sup>182</sup> Yuan, Chen, "Legitimation Discourse and the Theory of the Five Elements in Imperial China," 361.

thoughts about the fallen Yuan Dynasty are as substantial as the compilation process and the context of this source. Therefore, I presented the reason for the compilation of *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* by giving information about the political disarray during the Ming Dynasty and their motivation to write the official history of the Yuan Dynasty in the following part.

### 5.1.3 The reason of the composition

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the new dynasty needed to compile the official dynastic history of the former administration as a requirement of the Chinese historiography tradition. This requirement was rooted in the concept of the legitimacy of dynasties. However, how could it be possible to write down every event with its negative and positive aspects, and how could we believe its reliability as it was compiled by the same dynasty that destroyed the old one? For this reason, we need to look at the time and events of the compilation.

When the Yuan Dynasty was weakened because of constant rebellions due to epidemic and famine,<sup>183</sup> some rebels emerged and gathered the people around them, starting a resistance against the Yuan soldiers. Zhu Yuan-zhang, also known as Ming Taizu, defeated his rebellious rivals and established the Ming Dynasty in Nanjing in 1368.<sup>184</sup> He was a peasant and came from the lowest social status of Chinese society,<sup>185</sup> which is rare in Chinese history, but managed to defeat the Yuan Dynasty after seventeen years of campaigns with the support of his followers.

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<sup>183</sup> Mote, Frederick, *The rise of the Ming Dynasty, 1330-1367*, 37.

<sup>184</sup> Mote, Frederick, *A note on traditional sources for Yüan History*, 690.

<sup>185</sup> Mote, Frederick, *The rise of the Ming Dynasty, 1330-1367*, 44.

After Ming Taizu founded the Ming Dynasty, he reactivated the Historiography Office<sup>186</sup> and ordered the compilation of *Yuan Shi*. Compiling the history of the former dynasty has positive aspects as it helps to control the past and be recognized as a legitimate heir as a newly established dynasty. Since the Ming dynasty was a newly established administration, they needed to prove that they were the official heir by writing the history of the previous dynasty. Furthermore, they had the opportunity to control the history of the Mongol administration in China.

In addition to controlling the past and having legitimacy theories, Atwood makes a convincing statement that one of the main reasons for the compilation of the former dynasty was to have a reference source such as an encyclopedia.<sup>187</sup> *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* mainly focused on the events in Chinese lands rather than Chinggis Khan's life or his campaigns in western lands. Therefore, when we include Yang's suggestion about standardization of historiography<sup>188</sup> to Atwood's suggestion, we can fully understand the reason for the compilation of *Yuan Shi*.

Conclusively, there were traditional changes in Chinese historiography, taking on a more authoritarian style, and it was written due to the political concerns of the Ming Dynasty at that time. When we look at how events are conveyed, we can comprehensively understand the period in which it was compiled and the perspective of this medieval Chinese source on Chinggis Khan.

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<sup>186</sup> Chan, Hok Lam, "The rise of Ming T'ai-tsu (1368-98): Facts and fictions in early Ming historiography," 689.

<sup>187</sup> Atwood, Christopher, "The History of the Yuan, Chapter 1," 1.

<sup>188</sup> Yang suggests that the new standardization of Chinese historiography due to orthodox neo-Confucianism requires finishing the official histories quickly. Yang, Lien-Sheng, "The Organization of Chinese Official Historiography," 54.

CHAPTER 6  
COMPARISON OF *THE SECRET HISTORY*,  
*JAMI' AL-TAWARIKH*, AND *YUAN SHI*, CHAPTER 1

It is important to learn how Chinggis Khan is reflected in the major primary sources, as he is one of the distinguished figures in Asian and world history. He was born in an unstable environment and struggled to survive since childhood but managed to unite the people of Inner Asia and become the founder of a world empire spread across Eurasia. As a leader who influenced large geographies and cultures through conquests, it could be expected that the perception of Chinggis Khan in the major primary sources would have more differences than similarities, and may have more negative perceptions than positive ones. Therefore, as I presented in this chapter, it is surprising to reveal that these sources did not have opposite perceptions, and only their approach to events differ.

### 6.1 Fairness and harsh measures of Chinggis Khan

Although they were written in different periods in different regions, we know that these sources were affected by the same lineage, the Toluids.<sup>189</sup> *The Secret History* and *Jami' al-tawarikh* were written to preserve the history of the Mongols and gain legitimacy from the golden lineage, the Chinggisid family, while *Yuan Shi* was written to gain legitimacy from the former legitimate Chinese dynasty,<sup>190</sup> the Yuan

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<sup>189</sup> Jackson, Peter, "The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire," 132.

<sup>190</sup> Yuan, Chen, "Legitimation Discourse and the Theory of the Five Elements in Imperial China," 363.

Dynasty. However, since they have different historiographic styles stemming from various concerns, they have distinctive approaches to the events in the Chinggis Khan period. In this respect, I have presented to whom or where Chinggis Khan's fair and harsh policies were directed and how these two traits were reconciled in our sources in the following parts of this chapter.

#### 6.1.1 Family relations

Since there is limited information about Chinggis Khan's childhood, our knowledge about this period is limited. Among our sources, *The Secret History* has the most comprehensive information about Chinggis Khan's childhood. In *Jami' al-tawarikh*, to describe the events of the early life of Chinggis Khan, Rashid al-Din occasionally used oral sources and mentioned the difficulties Temüjin had by presenting the environment he grew up in. On the other hand, the Ming Dynasty used the biographies Qubilai Khan had prepared and did not devote much space to explain and elaborate on the events of that time to compile *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*.

All of our sources mention the ancestors of Chinggis Khan and the Mongols, but *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* does not provide detailed information as much as other sources, although it mentions his earlier ancestors. *The Secret History* and *Jami' al-tawarikh* presented more insightful information of Chinggis Khan's relationship with his family members than our Chinese source. For instance, as *The Secret History* narrated many times, *Jami' al-tawarikh* explains how Temüjin suffered because of his relatives, especially when they departed after Yesügei died. Rashid al-Din frequently mentions that since he had no alternative except to stand firm after

being an orphan<sup>191</sup> to survive on the Mongolian steppe, he then legitimized his harsh measures. Meanwhile *Yuan Shi*, Chapter 1 only mentions Yesügei's military achievements, his title of Illustrious Founder, the Spiritually Primal Emperor (*Liehzu Shen Yuan Huangdi* 烈祖神元皇帝),<sup>192</sup> and his relationship with Ong Khan Toghril as his *anda*. It is most likely that Chinggis Khan was not keen on kinship and gave importance to the skills and merit of people more than their social status<sup>193</sup> because of these experiences.

After Yesügei died and his followers left Hö'elun with his young children behind, she tried to convince them to stay but failed. At that time, we see Temüjin weeping silently. According to *Yuan Shi*, Chapter 1 he shed tears when he saw an old servant of his father deserting them.<sup>194</sup> However, according to *Jami' al-tawarikh*,<sup>195</sup> Temüjin wept when this old servant was mortally wounded while attempting to return people who were leaving the campsite. Was he crying because he felt sad, or maybe desperate, because their followers were leaving them alone, or was he crying because his servant was loyal to them until the end? While these sources describe this event differently, according to *The Secret History*, the only event that Chinggis Khan cried was when he was searching for his wife Börte<sup>196</sup> at the Merkid camp.<sup>197</sup> His affection for his family and loyal followers is mentioned throughout our sources, while *Yuan Shi*, Chapter 1 mostly allows us to interpret ourselves in accordance with the tradition of non-interpretation of the Chinese historiography style. It is important to know the details of the events, as it will help

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<sup>191</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 144.

<sup>192</sup> Atwood, Christopher, "The History of the Yuan, Chapter 1," 9.

<sup>193</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 142

<sup>194</sup> Atwood, Christopher, "The History of the Yuan, Chapter 1," 9.

<sup>195</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 160.

<sup>196</sup> In Rachewiltz's translation, it says Temüjin called Börte's name, but did not cry (de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 40, § 110).

<sup>197</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 93, § 110.

us to have a better understanding of the character of Chinggis Khan and the perception of him in the major primary sources. Since there were limited sources to compile the early life of Chinggis Khan, the compilers might have tried to emphasize the events as they saw appropriate as with the incident of Bekter.

As *The Secret History* mentions, Temüjin and Jochi Qasar killed Bekter,<sup>198</sup> their half-brother, because he stole the fish they hunted together. It may appear heartless for Temüjin to kill his brother when he was still a child, however, there was another reason behind this incident. As the eldest son of Yesügei and his secondary wife, Bekter could have tried to build his power over his little brothers, including Temüjin. Temüjin was still young, but he was probably aware that he could not survive on the steppe if Bekter or someone else seized his belongings, namely, his family and a couple of horses. For this reason, Temüjin eliminated his opponent, and he did so for a legitimate cause and with determination, as Bekter should be punished for stealing the fish while his entire family was starving. However, *Jami' al-tawarikh* and *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* censored this incident probably because they believed that this event would degrade Chinggis Khan's image.

Chinggis Khan was peaceful with his other brothers as long as they were loyal and obeyed his orders because merit and talent were more important to him than kinship. In *The Secret History*, he only had quarrels with Qasar when he doubted his loyalty because of Teb Tenggeri's lies. Additionally, with Belgütei, after he caused many casualties by disclosing the decision of *quriltai* to the Tatar.<sup>199</sup> Temüjin never forgave those who harmed him or his plans, even if they were close to

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<sup>198</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 67-68, § 76-77; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 20-21, § 76-77.

<sup>199</sup> They decided to measure all Tatar against the linchpin of a cart and killed everyone taller than the linchpin, but then Belgütei disclosed that the Tatar fought for their lives by killing as many Mongol soldiers. Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 133, § 154; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 77, § 154.

him, thus he punished his brother by forbidding him to attend the *quriltai* until it ended. Unfortunately, none of these incidents are mentioned in *Jami' al-tawarikh* or *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*. By this, we can see how these sources are not providing detailed information about Chinggis Khan's relationship with his family as much as *The Secret History*.

In *Jami' al-tawarikh*, Chinggis Khan only fought with his brother Otchi Noyan (Otchigin) when Otchi Noyan laid wooden planks to prevent dust instead of stones in the campsite.<sup>200</sup> Chinggis Khan accused him of being disobedient and only forgave him after several days passed when he said he would not offend him again. In accordance with *The Secret History*, here, Rashid al-Din points out how Chinggis Khan reacted to people who do not listen to his orders even though they are from his family. Chinggis Khan did not see Otchi Noyan for days but excused him when he said he understood his wrongdoing and apologized. By this incident, although the events differ, we can see that Chinggis Khan has a similar attitude towards his brothers in *The Secret History* and *Jami' al-tawarikh*. Contrarily, *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* does not give any information about his relationship with his brothers or relatives.

Our sources also have conflicting information about Börte, Chinggis Khan's senior wife. In *The Secret History*, Börte's presence comes into prominence three times. Firstly, when she was abducted by the Merkid and pregnant when rescued, caused questioning of Jochi's legitimacy as the rightful heir of the Mongol Empire. In this regard, Rashid al-Din says Börte was already pregnant with Jochi when the Merkid kidnapped her.<sup>201</sup> By doing so, he probably desired to end the controversy about Jochi's biological father and make him a legitimate son of Chinggis Khan. In this regard, P. Jackson says that Rashid al-Din tried to do that because Jochi and

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<sup>200</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 2, 261.

<sup>201</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 146.

Tolui's wives were sisters, and it was important to have political alliances among their children<sup>202</sup> by stating the good relations between them.

Secondly, Börte advised Chinggis Khan to exterminate Teb Tenggeri because he continued insulting his brothers and he could have led people to oppose his sons in the future.<sup>203</sup> Other sources do not mention any of these or Teb Tenggeri by any means. Lastly, Börte advised Chinggis Khan to appoint a successor before embarking on western campaigns, as he was growing old. In the end, he chose Ögödei as his heir, however, according to *Jami' al-tawarikh*, Chinggis Khan chose his heir on his deathbed by himself. Whichever is true, there is no doubt that Chinggis Khan valued his wife's opinions regardless of her gender, in accordance with the Inner Asian nomadic culture that values the ideas of women, and the succession system of the Mongols changed as a result of these incidents.

Interestingly, *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* does not give any information about Chinggis Khan's relationship with his family or his thoughts on them even though they have a great role in Chinggis Khan's life, character, and policies. As I mentioned before, according to the Chinese historiography style and the new order in official dynastic histories, Chinese sources avoid making comments on events. *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* presents the ancestors of the Mongols and the Borjigin clan but does not mention their importance in Chinggis Khan's life as much as *The Secret History* and *Jami' al-tawarikh*. I believe that besides the historiographic changes, the indifference of the Ming Dynasty towards the history of the Mongols and their thoughts about the Yuan Dynasty was also instrumental in this ignorance and the perception of

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<sup>202</sup> Jackson, Peter, "The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire," 196.

<sup>203</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 227-230, § 245; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 170-172, § 245.

Chinggis Khan in *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*.<sup>204</sup> Consequently, we can say that Chinggis Khan was fair to his loyal followers and harsh to unfaithful and disobedient people. Accordingly, he valued loyalty more than kinship, listened to the advice of people he trusted, and was strict but forgiving towards those who showed remorse regardless of the kindred ship or gender, as long as they were not disobedient.

#### 6.1.2 Relationship with Jamuqa

In *The Secret History*, Jamuqa was portrayed as a mischief-maker, unwilling to come to terms, always plotting against Chinggis Khan, and selfish enough to plunder his followers. In addition, he was pictured as a harsh leader when they opposed the Merkid to save Börte by suggesting killing every Merkid, including women and children until no one remained.<sup>205</sup> Conversely, *Jami' al-tawarikh* portrays him as an intelligent, judicious, and competent man while highlighting his aggressive, untrustworthy, evil, and tricky personality.<sup>206</sup> *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*, however, does not elaborate on their relationship in detail.

Then, *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* briefly presents the battle between Jamuqa and Temüjin; it does not mention how Jamuqa and Temüjin became *anda*, or how Temüjin felt when Jamuqa acted against him. Throughout *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*, Jamuqa appears a few times as a clever talker who has an unreliable and treacherous character. As a part of the Chinese historiography style, the compilers censored

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<sup>204</sup> For legitimation issues in imperial China see Chan, Hok-Lam. (1984). "Legitimation in Imperial China: Discussion under the Jurchen-Chin Dynasty (1115-1234)." Seattle: University of Washington Press.

<sup>205</sup> Jamuqa says "We shall kill his wives and children / To the last one / Of his door the sacred frame / We shall smite to it shatters; / We shall utterly destroy his people / Till nothing will be left." (de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 35, § 105.

<sup>206</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 162, 177, 184.

information about other people when they were compiling the annal-biography of the ruler, even though Jamuqa's presence in Chinggis Khan's life was substantial.

Jamuqa was Chinggis Khan's close friend since childhood, and they shared many experiences as they grew up together. His actions, usually working with his rivals, shaped the character of Chinggis Khan and his policies as an emperor.

Jamuqa was a member of the Jadaran Mongols, and he was similar to Temüjin as someone who was trying to find a place for himself in the steppe world. However, he failed in the leadership race due to not being as far-sighted as Temüjin and could not manage his possessions as well as he did as in the cauldron incident, his attitudes during battles against the Kerait, and the Naiman. At first, he had more supporters, but he failed to use them wisely. He led them to join Temüjin or lost them in battles. In the end, he was betrayed by his men and killed by Chinggis Khan.

Being cruel was not a foreign concept for 12th-13th century nomads, but it is noteworthy that these events were attributed to different people or not mentioned at all in accordance with the historiography style and political agenda of the compilers. Although Rashid al-Din says it was Chinggis Khan who threatened to boil his enemies in cauldrons,<sup>207</sup> perhaps to show his ambivalent attitude towards the Mongols and show Chinggis Khan's determination to win, *The Secret History* says that Jamuqa is the one who boiled Chinos princes alive<sup>208</sup> as explained in Chapter 2. Rashid al-Din also states that when the Ja'ūriyat people heard and were scared of the aftermath, they submitted to Temüjin, but they also convinced other tribes to join him by praising his abilities as a caring ruler. It is mentioned in different sources that Chinggis Khan was fair to his loyal followers and harsh against his enemies, but

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<sup>207</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 161.

<sup>208</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 110, § 129; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 54, § 129.

scaring the enemy by threatening to boil them alive is only mentioned in *Jami' al-tawarikh*. Many of Jamuqa's followers did not tolerate this unnecessary behavior and abandoned him to join Temüjin. Contrarily, *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* does not mention this incident. In the end, the perception of Chinggis Khan remains positive in the major primary sources, while their approach to the events differs.

Since Chinggis Khan was a ruler who valued loyalty most, he did not tolerate betrayal or people who intercepted his way to the leadership even though they were close or related to him. Therefore, when Jamuqa became the *gürkhan* in 1201 and became one of his biggest rivals, he did not overlook his actions. In this regard, there are two outstanding conflicting pieces of information about Jamuqa's attitude and Chinggis Khan's response to him in our sources, namely, the battles against the Kerait and the Naiman. In *The Secret History*, Jamuqa is depicted as the primary cause of the conflict between Ong Khan Toghril and Chinggis Khan. Then, he was portrayed as a coward fleeing from the war, a traitor who plunders his followers, and a bad leader who makes his men resent him by going too far with his actions.

Interestingly, although it is not mentioned in *Jami' al-tawarikh* or *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*, *The Secret History* states that even though Jamuqa possessed considerable influence on the emergence of this battle, he sent a message to Temüjin beforehand and gave information about Toghril's battle order.<sup>209</sup> Another notable point is that Temüjin trusted him and arranged his soldiers according to this message. Why did he choose to trust Jamuqa when he is the usual troublemaker? I am not going to discuss the real intention of Jamuqa or examine his relationship with Chinggis Khan since it is not the main question of this thesis, but I need to point out that Temüjin was a talented judge of character. He knew whom to trust and was able to use people most

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<sup>209</sup> Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 147, § 76-77; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 90-91, § 170.

properly according to their abilities as a fair ruler. If we assume that Jamuqa sent a message, then Temüjin made the right decision to trust him. Owing to his proper battle array, he defeated the Kerait and became the most influential nomadic leader in the central and eastern Mongol steppe.

According to *The Secret History*, Jamuqa praised the Mongols and said they were different from the past when he was fighting against Temüjin beside the Naiman. By saying this, he was indirectly praising the administrative skills of his *anda*. Throughout *The Secret History*, Jamuqa is described as a confused man, who seeks power, wages battles, and betrays his friends. Yet, it is interesting that he constantly praises Temüjin and even sends a message to him before fighting against the Kerait. How could someone so devoted to his *anda* form alliances against him? Furthermore, how can he constantly praise and support someone whom he is regularly fighting?

Eventually, Jamuqa came face to face with Temüjin and chose death when he realized that his fight against him would never end. By killing his *anda* and one of his biggest rivals, Temüjin did not hesitate to act harshly when necessary and did whatever was necessary to maintain his power. They left the decision to Heaven and accepted the result. It is uncertain if there are answers to the previous questions, but it is certain that the life philosophies of the nomads, who try to leave everything to the decision of Heaven, need to be examined more closely in order to understand the reasons for their actions.

As a result, *The Secret History* contains the most insightful information about Chinggis Khan's relationship with his family and Jamuqa, whom he sees as his real brother. Additionally, T. May says it does not hide Chinggis Khan's weaknesses,

such as being afraid of dogs, killing his brother, and leaving his wife alone while escaping from the Merkid.<sup>210</sup>

*Jami' al-tawarikh* and *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* do not give any information about Jamuqa's messages during the battles against the Kerait and the Naiman, while *Jami' al-tawarikh* presents the cauldron incident differently. However, all of our sources are unanimous that Chinggis Khan was not harsh towards Jamuqa and attempt to fix their relationship until the latter became unfaithful to their friendship.

### 6.1.3 Relationship with Ong Khan Toghril

As of 1202, disagreements arose between Temüjin and Ong Khan Toghril. Temüjin forgave him without mentioning a word, even though Ong Khan Toghril did not share the spoils with him when he plundered the Merkid. He also disappeared when they were on a campaign against the Naiman and left Temüjin alone on the battlefield. However, the breaking point was when the Kerait invited Temüjin to a betrothal feast and set a trap to kill him. As a result, Ong Khan Toghril and his son were defeated, and although they managed to escape, they did not survive long in foreign lands. Henceforth, Temüjin took control of the Kerait people and gained significant power in Mongolia.

In *The Secret History*, Chinggis Khan's relationship with Ong Khan Toghril is described in detail, more than *Jami' al-tawarikh* and *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*. *The Secret History* presents the increase in Temüjin's power that made his rivals jealous, including Jamuqa and Senggüm. It reflects Chinggis Khan's disappointment by Ong Khan Toghril's actions while he considered him as his father. It is possible that

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<sup>210</sup> May, Timothy, *Culture and Customs of Mongolia*, 64.

Temüjin disregarded his disappointment because Ong Khan Toghril protected him when he was alone after Yesügei died, however, if Temüjin wanted to maintain his power and become more independent as a ruler, he needed to defeat the Kerait leader.

Meanwhile, *Jami' al-tawarikh* and *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* are approaching their relationship differently. *Jami' al-tawarikh* constantly praises Ong Khan Toghril and does not blame him for his actions by blaming Senggüm and Jamuqa for convincing Ong Khan Toghril to betray Temüjin and destroy their relationship.<sup>211</sup> For instance, Rashid al-Din states that the Merkid sent Börte to Ong Khan after they abducted her in retaliation of Mother Hö'elun, and Ong Khan sent her to Temüjin without harming her.<sup>212</sup> However, in *The Secret History*, Temüjin is the one who saved Börte by defeating the Merkid, while *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* does not mention anything about this incident. The compilers do not confirm that Ong Khan Toghril sent her to Temüjin nor helped him to defeat the Merkid.

Ong Khan Toghril's image differs in our sources even after he died. According to *The Secret History*, after the Naiman patrolmen killed Ong Khan Toghril, Tayang Khan dishonored his head and crushed it into pieces. On the contrary, *Jami' al-tawarikh* states Tayang Khan was quite angry that such a great man was killed. Hereupon, he ordered Ong Khan Toghril's head pleated in silver, and for a long time, he kept it over his throne as a mark of respect.<sup>213</sup> When we consider the father-son relationship of Chinggis Khan and Ong Khan Toghril, it is possible for compilers of *The Secret History* and *Jami' al-tawarikh* to resent him for his betrayal and attribute a negative image to him. However, *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* remains

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<sup>211</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 184.

<sup>212</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 146.

<sup>213</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 192.

objective about the incident, presumably, they do not care about their relationship, but for the first time, it mentions Chinggis Khan's feelings towards someone from his inner circle, a father-like protector, in detail.

*Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* does not mention how he met with Börte, Jamuqa, or Ong Khan Toghril as if Chinggis Khan expanded his influence and became powerful without receiving help from others. The compilers most likely attempted to praise him by hiding his negative attributes and revealing his strong leadership.

Abruptly, *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* presents how Ong Khan Toghril fought with his own family for the Kerait throne and survived with the help of Yesügei. By now, *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* did not mention Ong Khan Toghril or the means with which he and Temüjin became close through a succession of misfortunes, such as the abduction of Börte or the betrayal of Jamuqa.

It also points out how Temüjin helped him and honored him as his father for the sake of his relationship with Yesügei. Interestingly, Temüjin is the one who honored Ong Khan Toghril by accepting him as his father. At that time, Ong Khan Toghril was the leader of the Kerait, but Temüjin was not even a tribal chief. Therefore, it seems anachronistic to say that when we consider he was not an entirely independent power himself. However, he had a flourishing power and a kind side to influence people. Thus, people who longed for a powerful but caring ruler joined Temüjin from different regions, most probably because they were becoming tired of being in constant battles, even with their relatives and rulers. As a fair ruler, Temüjin gave them a chance to achieve what they wanted regardless of their background. Although *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* censors other people's contributions and only focuses on Chinggis Khan by giving him credit for nearly everything, it remains one of the most significant primary sources on Mongol studies.

In *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*, Chinggis Khan and Ong Khan Toghril's relationship is described more superficially than other sources, and he is depicted as superior to Ong Khan Toghril. On the contrary to *The Secret History* and *Jami' al-tawarikh*, Temüjin is the one who defeated the Merkid Toqto'a and gave booty to Ong Khan Toghril. However, later Ong Khan Toghril attacks the Merkid alone but does not give any share to Temüjin. In this way, Temüjin was portrayed as a thoughtful and benevolent person, but Ong Khan Toghril was depicted as ungrateful and greedy.

After these incidents, the compilers described how Temüjin sent his generals to help Ong Khan Toghril to save his family from the Naiman. Since Temüjin valued loyalty, his sense of fidelity to his companions likely influenced his decision. Thereafter, the following incidents were presented as parallel with other sources until the battle against the Kerait.

Jamuqa spoke ill about Temüjin and convinced Senggüm to fight against him by setting a trap regarding the betrothal feast. As rarely happens, probably to highlight his victory, *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* describes Temüjin's side as weak and the people as frightened of uncertain consequences of the upcoming battle.<sup>214</sup> In the end, he managed to defeat the Kerait and had control over a large part of Mongolia.

Consequently, Chinggis Khan was fair enough towards Ong Khan Toghril until he became untrustworthy and disloyal to their father-son relationship. Whether their relationship had become so fragile because of Jamuqa or Ong Khan Toghril's ambitions, there is no question that Chinggis Khan did not hesitate to protect his achievements and the possibilities of his future achievements.

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<sup>214</sup> Atwood, Christopher, "The History of the Yuan, Chapter 1," 19.

#### 6.1.4 Relationship with followers

In our sources, Chinggis Khan's administrative and military skills were praised many times while the loyalty of faithful followers, alongside the fortune of Heaven, was recorded as a fundamental element of his success. He was a good judge of character and succeeded to gather people with military, artistic, scientific, executive, and financial skills across Eurasia. Until he became the great khan in 1206, Chinggis Khan acted out of revenge and personal issues, but from this date onwards, he saw himself as someone chosen by Heaven and acted as the ruler of an empire.

Additionally, he knew how to be fair or harsh from a very young age and ruled his subjects by highlighting loyalty and merit as the most important phenomenon.

Even if a man was a former enemy, Temüjin knew how to attract a man to his side and use him most efficiently. After his father died, he fought against many tribes and attracted reliable men from nearly all of them. For instance, four steeds<sup>215</sup> of his army commanders were unrelated to him by blood, but they had been very beneficial to Chinggis Khan on many occasions. They showed their loyalty to Chinggis Khan by making enormous contributions during and after the empire was built. In return, Chinggis Khan took advantage of them and gained many followers by ignoring their past, nationality, or religion, as long as they remained loyal to him. He also displayed mercy to those who tried to protect their rightful lord until the end, and he hated betrayers, resisters, and those who harmed him or his people.

*The Secret History* constantly praises Chinggis Khan's good character and leadership while presenting his fair and harsh policies. The most prominent example in this regard is the death of Bekter when he stole the fish they were meant to eat together, and did not care about others. This incident was reconciled when Bekter

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<sup>215</sup> Bo'orchu, Muqali, Boroqul, and Chila'un Ba'atur.

admitted his fault and did not argue with Temüjin when he came to kill him. In another incident, Chinggis Khan did not forgive Belgütei when he disclosed the decision of the *quriltai* and caused the Mongols to suffer many casualties, or Qasar when he doubted his loyalty. These events depict Chinggis Khan was not favoring kinship when he believed they were wrong and indifferent to his family if they were harming his life, people, or administrative matters.

Although *Jami' al-tawarikh* and *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* avoid mentioning any of these incidents, they present Chinggis Khan's fair and harsh policies on different occasions. For instance, both *Jami' al-tawarikh* and *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* mentioned how Temüjin punished those<sup>216</sup> who disobeyed his orders by chasing booty in the battle against the Tatar.<sup>217</sup> Although he said he would share the booty among themselves after the combat, some people did not listen to him and jeopardized the lives of everyone. The nomadic tribes were a community accustomed to taking their share themselves, so they might doubt that Temüjin would share the booty with them. However, as he was fair and generous to his people and hated disobedience, Temüjin seized their property and exiled them. As a rising power, he faced many difficulties and achieved significant successes by then. Feeling obliged to protect what he possessed, Temüjin harshly punished those who were not obedient, even if they had close ties with him. Subsequently, they were angry with Temüjin and joined Ong Khan Toghril<sup>218</sup> while he was busy following the Tatar and exterminating the whole of them.

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<sup>216</sup> Qutula Qa'an's son Altan, Nakün Taishi's son Quchar and Temüjin's uncle Daritai Otchigin.

<sup>217</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 182.

<sup>218</sup> Altan and Quchar of the Qardakin tribe helped Jamuqa and Ong Khan against Temüjin in 1203. Onon, Urgunge, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), 140, 141, § 166; de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 84, § 166.

Temüjin always remembered those who disrespected himself as a ruler and humiliated his men. Moreover, he was patient, and when the time came, he eliminated all his opponents by acting carefully. Therefore, according to *The Secret History* and *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*, when he went against the Jürkin, he did not disregard punishing Jürkin Buri Bökö, who had caused a fight and injured his brother during the festival on the Onon River. However, this incident is not mentioned in *Jami' al-tawarikh* probably because Rashid al-Din was not interested or deliberately avoided it. Since Temüjin needed to protect his image as a rising power and his people as he promised as long as they stayed loyal to him. For these reasons, Temüjin exterminated the Jürkin.

In addition to being fair and protective over his followers, Temüjin also showed mercy on those who were loyal to their rightful lord until the end, even though they were enemy soldiers. For instance, According to *The Secret History*, during the battle against Jamuqa in 1201, Temüjin rewarded Jelme, one of his generals who saved his life and risked his own to bring him water and food from the enemy camp. Therefore, Temüjin rewarded him for his services and assigned him to strategic positions after becoming the Great Khan. In addition, after this battle, he met one of his best generals, Jebe of the Tayici'ud, and caused him to work for himself by praising his abilities after seeing he was honest, skillful, and loyal to his rightful lord. By doing so, *The Secret History* reflects Chinggis Khan as a fair, generous, and visionary ruler.

Other primary sources also mentioned his pleasure towards his followers who were determined to fight until the end. According to *Jami' al-tawarikh*, during the battle against the Naiman, Temüjin praised the Naiman soldiers who tried to protect their rightful lord until the end, and even offered them to surrender at the beginning

of the battle. In this context, *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* notes that Temüjin was pleased with the desire of Otchigin and Belgütei to fight to the end against the Naiman, despite their lack of numbers, and expressed the importance of having such loyal followers when they supported him in the great assembly.

Chinggis Khan behaved fair enough while sharing the spoils among his people, would often not have killed his enemies if they surrendered at the beginning of the battles, and took care of the foundlings by giving them under the tutelage of Mother Hö'elun.<sup>219</sup> He brought many tribes under his rule by force or consent, then distributed them among his family members and trusted followers.<sup>220</sup> According to *The Secret History*, Boro'ul Noyan, a trusted follower of Temüjin, died when he went against the Qori Tumat people. Thus, after taking them under submission, Temüjin gave Tumat people in the service of Boro'ul's family<sup>221</sup> as a part of his fairness policy.

Chinggis Khan was an upright, determined and foresighted person. As recorded in all of our sources, he managed to turn all disadvantages into advantages and defeated the Naiman with clever tactics even though their horses were weak, soldiers tired, and their lack of numbers. After becoming the Great Khan in 1206, Chinggis Khan rewarded his followers who supported him and stood by his side. He appointed them to important positions and gave people to their service. He valued their opinions and did what he thought appropriate for the sake of everyone.

In 1211, Chinggis Khan declared war against the Jin dynasty when they demanded tribute. *The Secret History* says he defeated them and returned to deal with matters that were more crucial after receiving a large amount of compensation,

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<sup>219</sup> de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 60, § 138.

<sup>220</sup> de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 95-96, § 186-187; 115–116 § 203; 138–139, § 242.

<sup>221</sup> de Rachewiltz, Igor, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Trans.), vol I, 165, § 240.

while Rashid al-Din explained the campaigns in Tangut and Jin lands in detail, although he was confused about the chronologic order of the events. He records that the Mongols claimed many territories and destroyed the city walls, but Rashid al-Din did not mention any massacre like *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*. The Tangut and Jin resisted for a while, but eventually, they agreed to give tribute to avoid further damages.

On the contrary to *The Secret History* and *Jami' al-tawarikh*, *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* prioritizes the events in Chinese lands. The compilers of *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* usually do not make comments on events but sometimes they provide clues about their perspective of Chinggis Khan by using terms such as butchery, enormous corpses, and courtesy. It is stated that Chinggis Khan did not show courtesy towards prince Yunji<sup>222</sup> and did not show respect to him as the new ruler of the Jin Dynasty. Chinggis Khan thus far had negative feelings towards Jin because they had killed his ancestors in the past. As a rising power in the Mongolian steppe, he decided to cut ties with Jin while they were troubled by internal problems and the Song dynasty. The balance of power in the then-current realpolitik was in Chinggis Khan's favor.

In 1218, the Khwarazm Shah seized the goods of the Mongol merchants and killed them. Therefore, Chinggis Khan decided to move westward, and then conquered some of the most developed regions in Central Asia like Otrar, Samarqand, Bukhara, and Khurasan. During the Central Asia campaign, the Mongols took harsh measures against those who resisted them but did not harm those who surrendered, as confirmed in other major primary sources. While *The Secret History* and *Jami' al-tawarikh* elaborate this campaign, the compilers of *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* focused on Chinese territories more than other regions. Although Chinggis

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<sup>222</sup> Atwood, Christopher, "The History of the Yuan, Chapter 1," 23.

Khan was fighting against the Khwarazm Shahs in the west, they described how the Mongols conquered many territories in Central Asia then explained Muqali's campaigns in Chinese lands, the outcome of the battles, and how he butchered the inhabitants of Muzhou prefecture alongside other cities in China. As official dynastic history, it is understandable that the fundamental concern of the compilers is the events that affect Chinese lands, even so, it is unfortunate that they ignored many significant events and individuals when they were compiling the annal-biography of Chinggis Khan.

Furthermore, Rashid al-Din generally praised and addressed Chinggis Khan with supreme titles while discoursing his harsh measures and portraying his characteristics as a ruler, but campaigns in Central Asia are different. Rashid al-Din states that the Otrar incident happened under Sultan Khwarazm Shah's consent, and the battle between the Mongols and the Khwarazm Shahs broke out after Sultan insulted Chinggis Khan several times.<sup>223</sup> There was no buffer zone between the Khwarazm Shahs and the Mongols after Güchülüg died, and Chinggis Khan was a brilliant strategist. Throughout the conquest of Central Asia, generally by the guidance of the locals, the Mongols conquered many regions, which were rich in terms of goods, wealth, culture, and history as Khwarazm, Bukhara, Samarqand, and Khurasan. In addition, as stated in *The Secret History*, they killed people who resisted but did not harm those who surrendered and took intelligent people under protection in order to use their skills.

According to *Jami' al-tawarikh*, Chinggis Khan freed the Muslims from Güchülüg's religious despotism by describing his arrival as a response to the Muslims' prayers.<sup>224</sup> He killed Güchülüg and was tolerant towards the religions of

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<sup>223</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 236.

<sup>224</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 232.

the local people.<sup>225</sup> Additionally, Chinggis Khan was introduced as a thoughtful ruler as he appointed his trusted men to prevent the soldiers from oppressing local people after the conquest of Bukhara.<sup>226</sup> However, at the same time, Rashid al-Din occasionally attributes a brutal image to him by saying Chinggis Khan saw himself as the punishment of God for their sins<sup>227</sup> or by pointing out that he killed thousands of people.

Rashid al-Din praised them and reflected their good deeds as they were the ancestors of the current Ilkhanate Empire, but he occasionally highlighted the harsh behaviors of the Mongols, especially their presence in the Islamic World. This makes me conclude that Rashid al-Din was quite unhappy about the arrival of the Mongols and did not have any affection for them as he had an ambivalent attitude towards Chinggis Khan and his campaigns in Muslim lands. Incontrovertibly, we cannot expect an individual to do good deeds all the time, especially the 14th-century nomads who lived in challenging conditions. However, it is interesting that Rashid al-Din, as a court historian, speaks ill about the presence of the Mongols in Islamic lands. For instance, he states how the Mongols cut the bellies of the dead to search for treasures they might have swallowed<sup>228</sup> and how Khwarazm Shah's slave Jamaluddin and his companions were martyred when they killed the *shahna* (conservator of peace) of Hamadan.<sup>229</sup> The expressions such as martyrs show that Rashid al-Din sympathizes with the Muslims who stand against Mongolian rule.

Rashid al-Din presented the Mongol conquest of Central Asia from the eyes of the Muslims, even though the Ilkhanids were Muslims at the time, and praised

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<sup>225</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 230.

<sup>226</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 2, 247.

<sup>227</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 2, 247.

<sup>228</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 2, 255.

<sup>229</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 2, 256.

those who dared to oppose the Mongols. As Thackston said, Rashid al-Din may see himself as the successor of Chinggis Khan,<sup>230</sup> but sometimes we can see that he distances himself from the events. As a Muslim with a Jewish origins, and a statesman of the Mongol administration in the Muslim lands, he was neither completely inside nor outside of the events throughout his book. In the end, presenting the narratives which were not mentioned in *The Secret History* and the *Yuan Shi*, Chapter 1 makes *Jami' al-tawarikh* a more valuable source as it helps us to obtain a better understanding of that period.

In 1226 spring, Chinggis Khan went against the Western Xia, the Tangut, because they failed to uphold their promises. According to *The Secret History* and *Jami' al-tawarikh*, the Tangut betrayed the Mongols by withdrawing their soldiers from Chinese lands while they were supposed to help the Mongols. However, according to *Yuan Shi*, Chapter 1, Western Xia rebelled because they refused to give more hostages to Chinggis Khan and protected Ilqa Senggüm when he took refuge.<sup>231</sup> Since the Mongols used captured inhabitants of Western Xia to fight against Jin, we can understand why they repudiated to give more hostages. However, according to other primary sources we used in our study, the governor of Kashgar killed Senggüm,<sup>232</sup> so the latter reason is a little controversial and requires further studying. In the end, Western Xia could not resist the Mongols and surrendered in 1227, right after Chinggis Khan died. Subsequently, Chinggis Khan was buried in a secret place that we have not discovered yet.

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<sup>230</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, xviii.

<sup>231</sup> Atwood, Christopher, "The History of the Yuan, Chapter 1," 32.

<sup>232</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 192.

#### 6.1.5 Relationship with Teb Tenggeri

*The Secret History* is the only major primary source that mentions the quarrel between Chinggis Khan and Teb Tenggeri Kōkōchū. When people began to gather under Teb Tenggeri's command due to his increasing influence as a powerful shaman and son of Mönglik, Chinggis Khan needed to stop him before this problem grew larger. There are several points worth noting about Chinggis Khan's character and perception in this incident. First, when Qasar knelt in front of Chinggis Khan and relayed how the Qonqotans beat him, he grew angry with him and stated that he had more important tasks. Chinggis Khan was now a state leader and was too busy to deal with minor issues, even if this was about his brother. Here, giving importance to state affairs before his brother gives us important clues about his fair character. *Jami' al-tawarikh* and *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* did not mention disputes between Chinggis Khan and Teb Tenggeri Kōkōchū in detail nor how Teb Tenggeri insulted his brothers, as opposed to *The Secret History*.

Secondly, on the advice of Börte, Chinggis Khan decided to exterminate Teb Tenggeri. Apart from insulting his brothers Qasar and Temüge, Chinggis Khan might have realized that the state he built and his young children as future rulers were in jeopardy. In the end, he killed Teb Tenggeri to secure his authority and appointed a less influential shaman to strengthen his position by taking both religious and state affairs into his hands. The fact that none dared oppose Chinggis Khan reveals how powerful he was and how he had the unconditional support of his people.

#### 6.1.6 Character and image of Chinggis Khan

After Chinggis Khan conquered various nations, encouraged cross-cultural engagements and trade, claimed vast territories across Eurasia, and built a strong empire, he became one of the most influential persons in the 12th-13th century.

Harsh conditions of his childhood and the environment he lived in shaped Chinggis Khan's character as a person and a leader. He was born in an unstable environment where the Mongols longed for a ruler who would unite them. Throughout his life, Chinggis Khan brought stability to the regions he conquered. He was fair, kind, and generous to his loyal followers, while he was vengeful, evil, and harsh to his enemies. Consequently, he was a man of his time, as well as being one of the most intelligent, the most visionary, and the best strategist leaders the world has ever seen.

Chinggis Khan obtained talented people from the places he conquered under his protection and ensured that different aspects of various nations such as cultures, sciences, arts, innovations, and technologies spread safely across Eurasia. In addition, Rashid al-Din also points out how Chinggis Khan eliminated all the rebels on trade roads and ensured safety by putting patrols.<sup>233</sup> Due to his achievements, Chinggis Khan built a safe network between various regions and encouraged people to travel throughout the lands of the Mongol Empire. After being the Great Khan, he behaved more like a ruler of an empire, not only a tribal chief, while his interests and plans grew larger when his influence expanded in vast territories. In this respect, M. Biran suggested that, instead of their own culture, the Mongols helped to transmit the culture of their sedentary subjects throughout the Mongol Empire.<sup>234</sup> Owing to his ideologist character, cross-cultural exchange across Eurasia has grown and continued under the rules of his descendants.

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<sup>233</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 233.

<sup>234</sup> Biran, Michal, *Chinggis Khan: Makers of the Muslim World*, 87.

Chinggis Khan established a world empire out of disunited nomads and brought order to the region. According to our primary sources, he was fair to his followers and rewarded their loyalty, nonetheless, he was harsh to his enemies and punished them in brutal ways. In *Jami' al-tawarikh*, the characteristic features of Chinggis Khan are highly praised by referring to him as the conqueror of the world and a ruler who has the blessing of the Creator.<sup>235</sup> He also states Chinggis Khan had the talent and manner of a ruler.<sup>236</sup> As Rashid al-Din had an ambivalent attitude towards Chinggis Khan throughout *Jami' al-tawarikh*, besides being displeased with the campaigns in Islamic lands, he also praised Chinggis Khan's courage, intelligence, capability in administration, and generosity towards his followers. In this way, he attributes a more human image to him and highlights his achievements.

In section three of volume one and part two of *Jami' al-tawarikh*, Rashid al-Din specifically presents the benevolent character of Chinggis Khan and the noble customs of the Mongols,<sup>237</sup> in accordance with *The Secret History*. In brief, according to Rashid al-Din, Chinggis Khan describes how determination, vengeance, retaliation, taking precautions and knowing the condition of others are the foundation of being good individuals and leaders. Additionally, people must follow *yasaq*<sup>238</sup> and *yosun*<sup>239</sup> to keep order in the family, society, and administration.

However, the compilers of *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* do not give detailed information as *The Secret History* and *Jami' al-tawarikh* by isolating themselves from the events. Chinggis Khan is mentioned as Great Founder, the Lawgiving Martial Emperor for Whom the Dharma and Heaven Opened Good Fortune (*Taizu fa*

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<sup>235</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, xv.

<sup>236</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 1, 181.

<sup>237</sup> Thackston, Wheeler, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh* (Trans.), vol 2, 293-301.

<sup>238</sup> Laws of Chinggis Khan.

<sup>239</sup> Customs of the Mongols.

*tian qiyun sheng wu Huangdi* 太祖法天啟運聖武皇帝) in the first sentence of his annal-biography.<sup>240</sup>

It is noteworthy that this Chinese source mentions the blessing of Heaven and portrays Chinggis Khan as a great leader. Throughout the *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*, the incidents are presented differently or not mentioned, unlike other primary sources. In general, Chinggis Khan is portrayed as a wise leader with exceptional military and administration skills who managed to defeat his enemies and expand his influence by the blessing of Heaven as he was a fair and generous emperor. It is noteworthy that this Chinese source mentions the blessing of Heaven, and portrays Chinggis Khan as a great leader considering their indifference to the history of the Mongols. Consequently, they introduced Chinggis Khan as a great ruler and as the first emperor of the previous dynasty.

Additionally, Temüjin had a flourishing influence and the virtue of merit (*gongde* 功德). People's hearts were pleased by his kindness (*kuanren* 寬仁) when he provided furs and horses to them, so the Jaūriyet clan joined Chinggis Khan voluntarily and brought other tribes along their side. At the end of the first chapter, *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* praises Chinggis Khan's military tactics, intelligence, and uncanny achievements. Additionally, he posthumously took the title of *Lawgiving Martial Emperor for whom the Dharma and Heaven Opened Good Fortune* in 1309.<sup>241</sup>

Throughout *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* the compilers draw attention to events that concern China. It has suffered more censorship than other sources and some events are presented anachronistically while the narratives in Chinese lands were mainly in

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<sup>240</sup> Atwood, Christopher, "The History of the Yuan, Chapter 1," 6.

<sup>241</sup> Atwood, Christopher, "The History of the Yuan, Chapter 1" 34.

the center, even when the compilers were explaining the events outside of China. However, it is safe to say that *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* has a language that praises Chinggis Khan and his policies by expressing a generally positive perception.

Consequently, he was a man of his time, beliefs, and culture. In the major primary sources I used in this thesis, Chinggis Khan's perception was mostly positive. He was portrayed as an intelligent person, a great strategist, skilled in military and administration, a visionary and a brave leader.



## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

This study shows that the perception of Chinggis Khan in medieval Mongolian, Persian, and Chinese historical sources has many similarities as they portray him as a fair, intelligent, visionary, and brave ruler that conquered the world with the blessing of Heaven through many occasions. Moreover, he is also presented as a scary, vengeful, determined, and harsh ruler who adapted to the conditions of his time to survive. He managed to increase his followers, lands, influence, and network via his fair policies towards loyal followers, people with merit, people who accepted his sovereignty, and people who stayed loyal to their rightful lord until the end. Contrarily, he diminished resisters, unnecessary casualties, and disobedience via his harsh policies towards his enemies, rivals, resisters, unfaithful people, and those who intercept his plans.

Chinggis Khan placed importance to the loyalty and talent of his subjects regardless of their past, ethnicity, gender, or religion. He paved the way for rich booty and stability by conquering vast lands and building or reshaping existing administrative institutions. These sources were in favor of Chinggis Khan and the Mongols as they were compiled at the behest of descendants of Chinggis Khan or by people who shared a common history with the Mongols of the medieval period. As the founder of a world empire from scattered tribes of the Mongol steppe, Chinggis Khan knew when to be fair or harsh. In our sources, these policies were reconciled by emphasizing his good deeds and legitimizing or censoring those they attribute negatively.

*The Secret History of the Mongols* is the most voluminous primary source on Chinggis Khan and the Mongol Empire, which was written from the Mongolian point of view. It gives insightful information about the Mongol royal family and presents the events by censoring the incidents that degrade the image of Chinggis Khan like the cauldron incident or not showing courtesy to the Jin emperor. It also provides us a glimpse of the daily life of the Mongols of medieval times, the emergence of a world empire, and the perception of Chinggis Khan on contemporary events. Since *The Secret History* is one of the fundamental sources of *Jami' al-Tawarikh* and *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*, they share similar perceptions of Chinggis Khan, but their approach to the events differs, as I presented in Chapter 6. It gives much more detailed information about Chinggis Khan as an individual and his feelings towards his family or the incidents, contrary to *Jami' al-Tawarikh* or *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1*.

*Jami' al-Tawarikh* is a collective work written at the scriptorium of Rab-i Rashidi by Rashid al-Din and his assistants at the command of Ghazan Khan and Öljeitü in 1300-1310. It was compiled using contemporary oral and written sources that had not survived until the present, and it is widely regarded as the first world history. It describes the events of the Chinggis Khan period less comprehensively than *The Secret History* and focuses on the events rather than individuals. In accordance with other sources, *Jami' al-Tawarikh* portrays Chinggis Khan as a kind, fair, and generous ruler who does not hesitate to use harsh measures when necessary. However, it also contains conflicting information with *The Secret History* and *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* like his relationship with Ong Khan Toghril or the Mongol campaigns in Muslim lands. *Jami' al-Tawarikh* presents significant information about Chinggis Khan's life, the Mongol Empire, the history of various nations that had contact with the Mongols, and their place in world history.

As a result of the long-standing Historiography Office and advanced writing techniques in China, *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* was compiled by Song Lian using the official Yuan court records, translated Mongolian works, and other contemporary sources in 1368-1370. *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* presents the conquests of Chinggis Khan and the events under his reign. Although it was prepared by utilizing valuable sources from the Yuan Dynasty and the compilers close relationship with the Mongolian lands and the Mongols, *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* describes the events very superficially, unlike *The Secret History* and *Jami' al-Tawarikh*. *Yuan Shi* focuses on the events that concern the Chinese lands while using more censorship than other sources and does not provide much detailed information about Chinggis Khan himself, like his relationship with his family or the motivation of his conquests.

As explained in Chapter 6, these sources represent different communities, cultures, times, and concerns of political legitimacy. They comprised different historiography styles and were affected by the realpolitik of medieval times, however, apart from owning different approaches to the events while describing his fair and harsh policies, they offer considerable similarities of Chinggis Khan. The main difference is the events in which these policies were mentioned such as Chinggis Khan's relationship with his family and followers, his interests, or his campaigns in Muslim and Chinese lands. While *The Secret History* yields detailed information about the Mongols and Chinggis Khan, throughout *Jami' al-tawarikh*, Rashid al-Din presents the events as he witnessed himself. On the other hand, the compilers of *Yuan Shi, Chapter 1* draw attention to events rather than people and have a more descriptive approach than other primary sources. Consequently, this thesis hopes to contribute to further studies on the life and perception of Chinggis

Khan by presenting his perception in *The Secret History*, *Jami' al-Tawarikh*, and *Yuan Shi*, Chapter 1.



APPENDIX A

SOME OF THE PRIMARY SOURCES

ON THE HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS

Some of the main sources on the history of the Mongols translated into English are as follows: The Secret History of the Mongols was translated by Francis Woodman Cleaves, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); Igor de Rachewiltz, (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004); and by Urgunge Onon, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990; Surrey, UK: Curzon, 2001. Also, Paul Kahn rewrites the epic completely in verse and named it *The Secret History of the Mongols: The Origin of Chingis Khan* (Boston: Cheng & Tsui, 1998), but it is not very reliable as it is rephrased to be more readable. W.M. Thackston's translation of Rashid al-Din's *Jami' al-tawarikh* (Cambridge. Mass.: Harvard University Press, 3 volumes, 1998-1999), J.A. Boyle's translations of Juwayni's *The History of the World Conqueror* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2 volumes, 1958), H.G. Raverty's translation of Juzjani's *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* (New Delhi, India: Oriental Books Reprint Corp., 1881), and H.A.R. Gibbs' translation of Ibn Battuta's *The Travels of Ibn Battuta* (London. Goodword Books, 4 volumes, 2000) are the main Persian and Arabic sources about the Mongols. Many Chinese sources contain information about the history of the Mongols, but unfortunately, only some of them have been translated into English. *Shengwu qinzheng lu* (Record of the Personal Campaigns of the Holy Warrior) was translated into French (Leiden: Brill, 1951) by L. Hambis and P. Pelliot, however, there is still not a complete translation of it into English. Chang Chun's travel book was translated into English with the title of *The Travels of an Alchemist* (London: George

Routledge&Sons LTD., 1931) by A. Waley. Then, C. Atwood recently translated the first chapter of *Yuan Shi* (Indiana: Mongolian Studies, Journal of the Mongolian Society, XXXIX, 2020). He also translated *Heidasilue* and *Mengdabeilu* as *The Rise of the Mongols: Five Chinese Sources* (The USA: Hackett Publishing Company, 2021). There are also European sources written as travel books. C. Dawson translated Plano Carpini's travel book with the title of *The Mongol Mission* (London & New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), D. Morgan translated William Rubruck's travel book with the title of *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck* (London: Hackett Publishing, 1990), and then H. Yule and H. Cordier translated the travel book of Marco Polo with the title of *The Travels of Marco Polo* (New York: Dover Publications, 2 volumes, 1992).

APPENDIX B

SUGGESTED DATES ON

THE COMPILATION OF THE SECRET HISTORY

Ying Chien, U. Seihi, G. Doerfer, P. Rachenevsky, Igor de Rachewiltz, F. W. Cleaves, G. Clauson, M. Masatsugu, U. Onon argue that this work was written right after Chinggis Khan's death and compiled in 1228. Although it is difficult to determine when this source was completed, it is hard to deny that the first manuscript may have been written in 1228. Correspondingly, L. Ligeti believes that if the year of the Rat refers to the urtext it must correspond to 1228, but if it refers to the whole book then it must correspond to 1252. Due to the lack of information about the events after the mid-13th century, Naka Michiyo, P. Pelliot, E. Haenish, and Sena Kozin presume this book was composed in 1240. While Yü Ta-chün assumes it was written in 1250-1251, R. Grousset believes that the year of the Rat corresponds to 1252 after Möngke, eldest son of Tolui and grandson of Chinggis Khan, became the great khan in the great assembly. Additively, while A. Waley vaguely stated that it was compiled after the middle of the thirteenth century, W. Hung believes it was composed in 1264, and G. Ledyard said the earliest possible composition could be in 1264. However, as U. Onon suggests, Qubilai fought for the throne against his brother in the civil war for years and secured his place on the throne in 1264, so they would not have the time nor desire to compose *The Secret History*. In addition to these discussions, O. Hidehiro said that *The Secret History* was written in 1324, but considering the period in which the events in the time of Chinggis Khan took place and the permanence of oral history, this date would be overdue.

## APPENDIX C

### PIONEERS OF THE SECRET HISTORY STUDIES

Here are some pioneers of *The Secret History* studies from different countries; S. A. Kozin and N. Poppe from Russia; E. Haenish and G. Doerfer from Germany; P. Pelliot, A. Mostaert L. Hambis, J. Dent, Toptchibashy from France; W. Cleaves and W. Hung from the USA; Okada Hidekiro, Naka Michiyo, Hattori Shiro from Japan; Tsenggdee-güng, Kh. Perlee, Ts. Damdinsüren, Keshigbatu, Altanvichir, Bugegeshik from Mongolia; Ahmet Temir from Turkey; Pavel Poucha from Prague; Wei Kwei-sun a Chinese scholar from India; Hsieh Tsai-shan, Yeh Te-hui Yao Ts'ung-wu, and Jagchid Sechen, Kuo-yi Pao from China.

## APPENDIX D

### MODERN DIVISIONS OF *JAMI' AL-TAWARIKH*

According to modern divisions, *Jami' al-tawarikh* is divided into three tomes and four volumes. The first tome, also known as *Tarikh-i Mubarak-i Ghazani*, presents the history of the Turkic nations, legends, genealogies, and how they were divided into divergent tribes. Then, it introduces the ruling family of the Mongols from Chinggis Khan's period to the end of Ghazan Khan's reign. The second part of it preserves the history of the Mongols, genealogies of the ruling family, the emergence of the Mongol Empire, and the successors of Chinggis Khan.

The second tome contains information about the history of all prophets, caliphs, and sultans since the time of Adam, alongside the history of Öljeitü's reign, which has not been found yet. The third tome is about the geography of the earth, but unfortunately, there is no trace of this tome today. In addition to these, there is an appendix of *Jami' al-tawarikh* called “*Shu'ab-i Panjganah (The Five Genealogies)*”<sup>242</sup> that gives information about the genealogies of five nations, the Arabs, Chinese, Jews, Mongols, and Franks.

Only four copies of *Jami' al-tawarikh* have survived from Rashid al-Din's lifetime. The Arabic copy consists of two parts, one of them is in the Khalili Collection, and another is in Edinburgh University Library. The other three copies are in Persian and kept in the Library of the Topkapı Palace Museum in Istanbul. In

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<sup>242</sup> In 1927, this book was found by Z.V. Togan in the Topkapı Palace Library. Then, “*Shu'ab-i Panjganah*” became the third tome, and the former third tome (geography of the earth) became the fourth tome in the later version.

addition to these four copies, other versions and manuscripts were compiled after Rashid al-Din died, and they are preserved in different countries today. Although I used Thackston's English translation in this study, different parts of *Jami' al-tawarikh* have been translated into various languages over time and have been the subject of academic studies.

*Jami' al-tawarikh* is considered the first historical text of the world and provides information about the genealogy of the ruling dynasty, the personal life of Chinggis Khan, the emergence of the Mongol Empire, and the daily life of the Ilkhanate Empire by using contemporaneous written and oral sources. It also reflects the intellectual side of the Mongols in the medieval period.

*Jami' al-tawarikh* also covers an extensive period and geography, presents the history of various nations with which the Mongols interacted, and contributes to the history of Asia in medieval times and world history studies. It was written by using significant sources, including *The Secret History of the Mongols* and *Altan Debter*. Since the Mongol Empire had powerful connections across Eurasia, Rashid al-Din could have access to secret archives and valuable informants.

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