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THE MONGOLS AND GLOBAL HISTORY

A NORTON DOCUMENTS READER

Morris Rossabi

City University of New York



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Part VI

Collapse of the Mongol Empire

Juvaini, The History of the World Conqueror

The Persian historian Juvaini devoted most of his work to descriptions of the Mongols' military campaigns, especially those in Central Asia. However, he was also fascinated by the roles elite women played in Mongol society. In this selection, he documents their involvement in the first major conflict within the Mongol confederation.

See the headnote on p. 70 for additional information on this text.

Of Töregene Khatun

When the decree of God Almighty had been executed and the Monarch of the World, the Hatim of the Age, Qa'an, had passed away, Güyük, his eldest son, had not returned from the campaign against the Qifchaq, and therefore in accordance with precedent the dispatch of orders and the assembling of the people took place at the door of the *ordu* or palace of his wife, Möge Khatun, who, in accordance with the Mongol custom, had come to him from his father, Chingiz-Khan. But since Töregene Khatun was the mother of his eldest sons and was moreover shrewder and more sagacious than Möge Khatun, she sent messages to the princes, i.e. the brothers and nephews of Qa'an, and told them of what had happened and of the death of Qa'an, and said that until a Khan was appointed by agreement someone would have to be ruler and leader in order that the business of the state might not be neglected nor the affairs of

the commonweal thrown into confusion; in order, too, that the army and the court might be kept under control and the interests of the people protected.

Chaghatai and the other princes sent representatives to say that Töregene Khatun was the mother of the princes who had a right to the Khanate; therefore, until a *quriltai* was held, it was she that should direct the affairs of the state, and the old ministers should remain in the service of the Court, so that the old and new *yasas* might not be changed from what was the law.

Now Töregene Khatun was a very shrewd and capable woman, and her position was greatly strengthened by this unity and concord. And when Möge Khatun shortly followed in the wake of Qa'an, by means of finesse and cunning she obtained control of all affairs of state and won over the hearts of her relatives by all kind of favours and kindnesses and by the sending of gifts and presents. And for the most part strangers and kindred, family and army inclined towards her, and submitted themselves obediently and gladly to her commands and prohibitions, and came under her sway. *The Prophet of God (may God bless him and give him peace!) hath said: 'Hearts were formed to love them that use them well and to hate them that use them ill.'* And all manner of men bent their steps towards her; while Chingai and the other ministers of Qa'an continued to perform their duties as before, and the governors on every side remained at their posts.

Of Fatima Khatun

At the time of the capture of the place in which there lies the Holy Shrine of 'Ali ar-Riza (*upon whom be the most excellent of blessings and benedictions!*), she was carried off into captivity. It so chanced that she came to Qara-Qorum, where she was a procuress in the market; and in the arts of shrewdness and cunning the wily Delilah could have been her pupil. During the reign of Qa'an she had constant access to the *ordu* of Töregene Khatun; and when times changed and Chingai withdrew from the scene, she enjoyed even greater favour, and her influence became paramount; so that she became the sharer of intimate confidences and the depository of hidden secrets, and the ministers were debarred from executing business,

and she was free to issue commands and prohibitions. And from every side the grandees sought her protection, especially the grandees of Khorasan. And there also came to her certain of the *sayyids* of the Holy Shrine, for she claimed to be of the race of the great *sayyids*.

When Güyük succeeded to the Khanate, a certain native of Samargand, who was said to be an 'Alid, one Shira, the cupbearer of Qadaq, hinted that Fatima had bewitched Köten, which was why he was so indisposed. When Köten returned, the malady from which he was suffering grew worse, and he sent a messenger to his brother Güyük to say that he had been attacked by that illness because of Fatima's magic and that if anything happened to him Güyük should seek retribution from her. Following on this message there came tidings of Köten's death. Chingai, who was now a person of authority, reminded Güyük of the message, and he sent an envoy to his mother to fetch Fatima. His mother refused to let her go saying that she would bring her herself. He sent again several times, and each time she refused him in a different way. As a result his relations with his mother became very bad, and he sent the man from Samargand with instructions to bring Fatima by force if his mother should still delay in sending her or find some reason for refusing. It being no longer possible to excuse herself she agreed to send Fatima; and shortly afterwards she passed away. Fatima was brought face to face with Güyük, and was kept naked, and in bonds, and hungry and thirsty for many days and nights; she was plied with all manner of violence, severity, harshness and intimidation; and at last she confessed to the calumny of a slanderous talebearer and avowed her falseness. Her upper and lower orifices were sewn up, and she was rolled up in a sheet of felt and thrown into the river.

One thou raisest up and givest him a kingdom, and then
thou castest him into the sea to the fishes.

After Ulugh-Noyan's death Qa'an commanded that as long as he lived affairs of state should be administered in accordance with the counsel of his wife Sorgotani Beki, the niece of Ong-Khan, by whom he had his eldest sons, Mengü Qa'an, Qubilai, Hülügü and Arigh Böke, and that the above-mentioned sons, the army and the

people, great and small, should be under the control of her command and prohibition, her loosening and binding, and should not turn their heads from her commandment. Now in the management and education of all her sons, in the administration of affairs of state, in the maintenance of dignity and prestige and in the execution of business, Beki, by the nicety of her judgement and discrimination, constructed such a basis and for the strengthening of these edifices laid such a foundation that no turban-wearer (*kuab-dar*) would have been capable of the like or could have dealt with these matters with the like brilliance. In any business which Qa'an undertook, whether with regard to the weal of the Empire or the disposal of the army, he used first to consult and confer with her and would suffer no change or alteration of whatever she recommended. The ambassadors and *elchis* too held her in great honour and respect, and the dependents and subjects of her Court in nearest and farthest East and West were distinguished from those of all the other princes by the dignity and protection they enjoyed, and because of her zealous concern for each of them individually their lives were contented and carefree. And the tax-gatherers, the *shahans* and the army, for fear of her punishment and discipline, were fain to deal equitably with the people. And whenever there was a *quriltai* or assembly of the princes, and there was great elegance, and decoration, and adornment, and embellishment on the part of everybody, she was distinguished above them all with respect both to her retinue and to her troops. And her protection was such that when during the reign of Qa'an certain *maliks* were involved in a dispute with some of her dependents regarding the tax and *qubchur* to be levied on her subjects and had committed excesses, she sent messengers to have the *maliks* brought to her presence and after the establishment of evidence had them put to death.

As for her control and management of her sons, though each of them is a khan and a personality in the mould of his intellect, and superior to all [other] princes in shrewdness and sagacity, nevertheless, whenever by reason of the occurrence of a death they awaited the accession of a new khan, she would allow no change or alteration of the ancient ordinances or *yasas*, although, in fact, they had the licence of authority and of command and prohibition. So it was that when Güyük Khan was raised to the Khanate

and there was search and inquiry as to which of the princes had deviated from the *yasa* and established custom and had issued *paizas* [passports] and *yarlighs*, he commanded that every order and *paiza* that had been issued since the death of Qa'an should be withdrawn. And in the *quriltai*, in the presence of all, most of the decrees which they had issued with regard to the assignment of taxes and the appointment and dismissal of tax-gatherers were laid before the princes [responsible for them]. All were put to shame save only Beki and her sons, who had not swerved a hair's breadth from the law, and this because of her great wisdom, self-discipline and consideration of the latter end of things, whereof even wise and experienced men are negligent.

And if women were like unto her, then would women be superior to men.

And at the time of the accession of Mengü Qa'an to the throne of the Khanate the same thing happened again, because after Güyük Khan's death everyone had issued his own decrees.

As for Beki, from the time when Ulugh-Noyan passed away, she had won favour on all sides by the bestowing of gifts and presents upon her family and kindred and dispensing largesse to troops and strangers and so rendered all subject to her will and planted love and affection in everyone's heart and soul, so that when the death of Güyük Khan occurred most men were agreed and of one mind as to the entrusting of the keys of the Khanate to her son Mengü Qa'an. For the report of her wisdom and prudence and the fame of her counsel and sagacity had spread to all parts, and none would gainsay her word.

Furthermore, in the management of her household and in the ceremonial of her court she laid for kinsmen and stranger such a foundation as the khans of the world had not been capable of.

And so she continued until the time when God Almighty through the mediation of her experience laid the bride of kingship in the bosom of Mengü Qa'an's distinction. And her hand was ever open in munificence and benefaction, and although she was a follower and devotee of the religion of Jesus she would bestow alms and presents upon *imams* and *shahids* and strove also to revive the sacred observances of the faith of Mohammed (*may God bless him and give him*

peace). And the token and proof of this statement is that she gave 1000 silver *baish* that a college (*madaxa*) might be built in Bokhara, of which pious foundation the *shaykh-al-Islam* Saif-ad-Din of Bakhraz should be administrator and superintendent; and she commanded that villages should be bought, an endowment made and teachers and students accommodated [in the college]. And always she would send alms to all parts to be distributed among the poor and needy of the Moslems; and so she continued until in Zul-Hijja of the year 649 [February–March, 1252], when the Destroyer of Delights sounded the note of departure.

The History of the World Conqueror, translated by John Boyle (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2 vols., 1958), 239–41, 244–46, 550–53.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe the different portraits of Töregene and Sorghaghtani Beki. Analyze their political maneuverings.
2. Judging from these selections, what is the role of women in Mongol society?
3. Can you generalize about the status of ordinary women from these selections?
4. Judging from the portrait of Fatima, what was the court's attitude toward Islam?

Rashid al-Din, Compendium of Chronicles

In this selection, Rashid al-Din shows the disunity and resulting conflicts among the Mongols, which weakened them and eventually led to the collapse of the Mongol Empire.

See the headnote on p. 59 for more information on this text.

The eldest of Ögei Qa'an's wives, Töregene Khatun, governed [the realm], and during this period confusion found its way into the borders and center of the Empire. Qa'an had made his grandson Shire-

min his heir-apparent, but Töregene Khatun and some of the emirs objected, saying that Güyük Khan was older, and they again summoned Batu to take part in the enthronement. Though he was offended with them and apprehensive because of the alarming nature of the past events, he set out, proceeding at a slow pace. Before his arrival and without the attendance of *aga* and *ini* [princes], they arbitrarily settled the Khanate upon Güyük Khan. Güyük Khan was afflicted with a chronic disease, and on the pretext that the climate of his old *yurt*, which his father had given him, was beneficial to his condition, he set out with a large army for the region of Emil-Qochin. When he approached this area, Batu became a little apprehensive. Sorghaghtani Beki, the eldest wife of Tolui Khan, because of the foundation of friendship that had been laid and consolidated between Jochi Khan and Tolui Khan and the families of either side since the time of Chingiz-Khan, sent the message that Güyük Khan's coming to that region was not devoid of some treachery. On that account, his apprehension was increased and he awaited the arrival of Güyük Khan with vigilance and caution.

History of Tolui Khan's Wife, Sorghaghtani Beki, and his sons after his death until the time when they became *qa'ans* and rulers through the efforts and endeavors of their mother and as the result of her ability and intelligence

After the death of Tolui Khan his sons together with their mother were in attendance on Ögei. He greatly honored and respected them and used to grant their petitions immediately. One day Sorghaghtani Beki asked Qa'an for one of the *ortags* [Trades]. He made difficulties about it, and Sorghaghtani Beki wept and said: "He that was my longing and desire, for whom did he sacrifice himself? For whose sake did he die?" When these words reached Qa'an's ear he said "Sorghaghtani Beki is right." And he begged her pardon and granted her request. She was extremely intelligent and able and towered above all the women in the world, possessing in the fullest measure the qualities of steadfastness, virtue, modesty, and chastity. Thanks to her ability,

when her sons were left by their father, some of them still children, she went to great pains in their education, teaching them various accomplishments and good manners and never allowing the slightest sign of strife to appear amongst them. She caused their wives also to have love in their hearts for one another, and by her prudence and counsel [she] cherished and protected her sons, their children and grandchildren, and the great emirs and troops that had been left by Chingiz-Khan and Tolui Khan and were now attached to them. And perceiving her to be extremely intelligent and able, they never swerved a hair's breadth from her command. And just as, when Chingiz-Khan was left an orphan by his father, his mother, Höelün Eke, trained him and all the army, sometimes even going into battle herself and equipping and maintaining them until Chingiz-Khan became independent and absolute, and attained to the degree of world-sovereignty, and accomplished great things thanks to his mother's endeavors, so too Sorqoqtani Beki followed the same path in the training of her children. It is said, however, that in one respect she was more long-suffering than the mother of Chingiz-Khan and won the palm from her for constancy. After a time Chingiz-Khan gathered from a cryptic remark of his mother that she wanted a husband and he gave her in marriage to Menglik Eching. [In the same way] Ögei Qa'an sent for Sorqoqtani Beki to give her in marriage to his son Güyük and sent _____¹ as his ambassador in this affair. When he had delivered Qa'an's *yarligh*, she answered: "How is it possible to alter the terms of the *yarligh*? and yet my thought is only to bring up these children until they reach the stage of manhood and independence, and to try to make them well mannered and not liable to go apart and hate each other so that, perhaps, some great thing may come of their unity." Since she had no mind for Güyük Khan and had rejected that proposal by this excuse, no doubt was left that she did not wish to marry. On this account she was considered superior to Höelün Eke, the mother of Chingiz-Khan.

During the reign of Ögei Qa'an, after Tolui Khan's death, two *hazanas* of Süldüs, part of the army belonging to Tolui Khan and his sons, were given by [Ögei] to his son Köten on his own authority without consulting the *aga* and *ini*. The *timen* and *hazana*

commanders who had been connected with Yeke-Noyan, such as _____², when they learnt of this action, made a joint statement before Sorqoqtani Beki, Möngke Qa'an, and their *aga* and *ini*, to this effect: "These two *hazanas* of Süldüs troops belong to us by virtue of the *yarligh* of Chingiz-Khan, and now he is giving them to Köten. How can we allow this and in so doing contravene the edict of Chingiz-Khan? We shall make representations to the Qa'an." Sorqoqtani Beki replied: "What you say is true, but we have no shortage of possessions, whether inherited or acquired, and are in no kind of need. The army and we ourselves all belong to the Qa'an: he knows what he is doing, and it is for him to command and for us to submit and obey." And when Sorqoqtani Beki spoke thus, the commanders were silenced, and all who heard approved.

There is no doubt that it was through her intelligence and ability that she raised the station of her sons above that of their cousins and caused them to attain to the rank of *qa'ans* and emperors. The main reason that her sons became *qa'ans* was as follows. When Ögei Qa'an died, Törege Khatun did not allow Shiremün, who by virtue of his will was heir-apparent, to become *qa'an*, but ruled for awhile herself. When she set up her eldest son Güyük Khan as Emperor, Batu, who was the senior of them all, did not attend on the excuse that he was suffering from gout. Güyük Khan was offended at this and in his heart was meditating an act of treachery against Batu. On the pretext that the climate of Emli was good for his sickness, he set out in that direction. Sorqoqtani Beki, learning of his intention, secretly sent a message and warned Batu. Shortly afterward Güyük died, and the sons and kinsmen of Ögei Qa'an wished to set up Shiremün as Qa'an, but first they sent to summon Batu. He said: "I am suffering from gout. It would be better for them to come to me." Törege Khatun and the family of Ögei Qa'an objected to this suggestion saying: "Chingiz-Khan's capital is here: why should we go thither?" Now Batu was old and honored and the eldest of all the princes; and his was the right to nominate a new ruler. Sorqoqtani Beki said to her eldest son Möngke Qa'an: "The others will not go to Batu, and yet he is the senior of them all and is ill. It is for thee to hasten to him as though upon a visit to a sick bed." In

¹ Blank in all the MSS.

² Blank in all the MSS.

obedience to his mother's command he proceeded thither and Batu, in gratitude for this gesture and in consideration of previous obligations, swore allegiance to him and set him up as Qa'an.

History of How Mengeser Noyan Examined the case of the emirs who had plotted treason along with the princes

The next day he ordered the detention of the group of *noyans* and emirs, men such as Elchitei the great *noyan*, Taunai, Jangi, Qankh-tai, Sorghan, Taunai the Younger, Toghan, and Yasa'ur, each of whom regarded himself as of such rank that the highest heaven had no power over him, and also a number of other *timen* commanders and leaders, whom it would take too long to name. And he commanded the Emir Mengeser, the *yanghuchi*, to sit and hold an inquiry along with a number of other emirs. They began their questioning and continued the trial for several days. They put the questions in an extremely subtle manner, so that in the end the contradictions in their words became apparent, no doubt remained as to their conspiracy, and they all together confessed and admitted their guilt, saying: "We had made such a conspiracy and plotted treason." Môngke Qa'an, following his laudable custom, wished to accord them the honor of pardon and forgiveness, but the *noyans* and emirs said: "To neglect and delay removal of an enemy when the opportunity presents itself is remote from the highway of rectitude."

Wherever thou oughtest to make a scar, when thou puttest a salve thereon, it availeth not.

Realizing that their words were spoken out of sincerity and not from motives of self-interest or hypocrisy, he ordered them all to be bound and imprisoned, and for awhile he reflected about their fate.

One day when he was seated in his Court on the throne of empire and sovereignty, he ordered each of the emirs and pillars of state to recite a *bilg* about the guilty men based upon what he had seen. Each of them said something within the limits of his understanding and to the extent of his knowledge, but none of this took root in his

heart. Mahmud Yalavach was standing at the far end of the assembly. Said Môngke Qa'an: "Why does not this *ebügen* [old man] say something?" They said to Yalavach: "Come forward and speak." He replied: "In the presence of kings it is better to be an ear than a tongue. However I remember one story which I will relate if I am so commanded." "Speak," said Môngke Qa'an. Yalavach related as follows: "When Alexander had conquered most of the countries of the world he wished to go to India, but his emirs and chief men set foot outside the highway of obedience and loyalty and each of them breathed the breath of despotism and autocracy. Alexander was at a loss and sent a messenger to Rum to Aristotle, his peerless vizier, to tell him of the refractoriness and arrogance of his emirs and to ask what measures he should take to deal with them. Aristotle went into a garden with the messenger and ordered the trees with large roots to be dug out and small, frail saplings to be planted in their stead. He gave no reply to the messenger, and when the latter grew tired [of waiting] he returned to Alexander and said: 'He gave me no answer.' 'What didst thou see him do?' asked Alexander. 'He went into a garden,' said the messenger, 'and pulled out the large trees and planted small branches in their stead.' 'He gave his answer,' said Alexander, 'but thou didst not understand.' And he destroyed the despotic emirs who had been all-powerful and set up their sons in their stead."

Môngke Qa'an was extremely pleased with this story and realized that these people must be done away with and others maintained in their place. He ordered the emirs that were imprisoned and those who had incited the princes to rebellion and cast them into the gulf of so great a crime to be put to the sword of public execution. There were seventy-seven persons, all of whom were put to death.

As for Oghul-Qaimish, Khwaja's mother, she sent back the messenger saying: "You princes promised and gave a written undertaking that the kingship would always remain in the family of Ogei Qa'an and you would not rebel against his descendants. And now you have not kept your word." When this message was delivered Môngke Qa'an was exceedingly angry and wrote the following *yarligh*: "The wives of Jochi-Qasar, Orchigin, and Bilgitei Noyan, who

were the brothers of Chingiz-Khan, attended the counsel for the *quriltai*, but Oghul-Qaimish did not. If the *qams* and Qadaq, Chingai, and Bala, who were the emirs of the *ordo* of Güyük Khan, should call or proclaim any one ruler or *khagan* and that person becomes ruler or *khagan* because of their words, they shall see what they shall see." And at once he sent a messenger to seize and bring her with her hands stitched together in raw hide. When she arrived she was sent with Qadaqach, the mother of Shiremün, to the *ordo* of Sorqoqtani Beki. Mengeser Yarghuchi stripped her naked, dragged her into court, and began to question her. She said: "How can others see a body which has been seen by none but a king?" Her guilt having been ascertained she was wrapped in felt and flung into the river. Chingai too arrived, and he was dealt with by Danishmand Hajib in Ramadan of the year 650 [November–December, 1252].

In Besh-Balig the *idi-qut* who was the leader of the idolaters, arranged with certain people to rise up on a Friday, when the Muslims were gathered together in the Friday mosque, and kill them all inside the mosque. A slave amongst them, who was informed of their plan, confessed Islam and, turning informer against them, demonstrated their guilt of this crime. The *idi-qut* was brought to the *ordo* and put on trial; and when he had confessed his guilt orders were given that he should be taken to Besh-Balig and put to death on a Friday after prayers in the presence of the whole population.

History of How Möngke Qa'an Dispatched emirs in every direction to deal with the remainder of the rebels and how he pardoned their crime

Since some of the rebels were still left [hidden] in corners and it would have been difficult and would have taken a long time to bring them to Court, he sent Bala Yarghuchi with a group of *nölös* to the armies of Yesü-Möngke to inquire about these people and put to death all that had taken part in the conspiracy. And he sent another emir to Khitai charged with the same task.

And when the thought of those wicked men had been dismissed from his august mind the fair character of the fortunate Emperor required him to regard it as his first duty to respect the claims of kinship and consanguinity. He ordered Shiremün to accompany

Qubilai Qa'an, Naqu, and Jaghan Noyan to Khitai. As for Kihwaja, out of gratitude to his wife, who had spoken praiseworthy words, he exempted him from taking part in the campaign and fixed his *yurt* in the region of the Selenge, which is near Qara-Qorum.

It was from this time that discord first appeared amongst the Mongols. Chingiz-Khan used to urge his sons to concord and unity and say: "As long as you are in agreement with one another fortune and triumph will be your friends, and your opponents will never gain the victory." By reason of this quality it has been possible for Chingiz-Khan and his posterity to conquer the greater part of the world. It is said that one day at the time of his first rising to power he was giving advice to his sons, and by way of an example he drew an arrow from his quiver, gave it to them, and said: "Break it." It was broken with only a little effort. Then he gave them two, which were also easily broken. And he went on increasing the number up to ten, and even the athletes and *bahadurs* of the army were unable to break them. "So it is with you also," he said. "As long as you support one another none will gain the victory over you and you will enjoy kingship and empire for a long period of time." Had the sultans of Islam followed the same path, their dynasty would not have been extirpated.

As for Arıg Böke, when he had fattened his horses in the summer and autumn, he did not keep his word but broke his promise and again went to war against [Qubilai] Qa'an. When he came to Yesünger, who was stationed on the frontier of the region, he sent a messenger to say that he was coming to surrender. Having thus rendered him careless he fell upon him, routed and scattered him and his army, and restored the *ordos* of Chaghatai Khan and Köügen as well as his own. Meanwhile, Yesünger crossed the desert and made his way to the Qa'an, to whom he reported that a rebel was approaching. The Qa'an sent a messenger to Taghachar and gathered *cherigs*. He himself, Taghachar, Hulaquir, the son of Elchitei, and Narin-Qadan, with the armies they commanded, were the first [to be ready]. Hulaquur, Nachin Küregen, Derekei Küregen of the Ikires people, Oradai, and Qadan, each with his own *timen*, proceeded in the van and fought well. As for Yesünger, because his troops had been dispersed, he did not take part in this battle. The Qa'an, with

the aforementioned armies, encountered Ariq Böke on the edge of the desert. They joined battle in a place called Abjiya-Kötöger, in front of a hill called Khucha-Boldağ and a *na'ur* called Shimultai. Ariq Böke's army was defeated, and many of the Oirat tribesmen were killed. And when Ariq Böke was defeated with his army and fled, the Qa'an said: "Do not pursue them, for they are ignorant children. They must realize what they have done and repent." Ten days later Asutai, the son of Möngke Qa'an, who led Ariq Böke's rearguard, came to [Ariq Böke] and heard that the army of Taghachar and the other armies of the Qa'an had turned back. Ariq Böke and Asutai consulted together again and gave battle after mid-day on the edge of the sand desert called Elet, by Shirgen-Na'ur and Shilügelig hill. The Qa'an's army defeated the right wing of Ariq Böke's army, but the left wing and center stood firm till nightfall and in the night caused the Qa'an to withdraw. Both princes now retired with their armies and went to their own *ordos*, while most of their troops perished because of the great distance and their being on foot. In the winter both encamped in their own quarters and passed the spring and summer there. As for Ariq Böke, having several times asked Alghu to help him with arms and provisions and having received no response, he equipped an army and set out against him. *And God knows best what is right.*

The Emir Ahmad held the vizierate with honor for nearly 25 years, and Gau Finjan was associated with him for 9 years more with his customary rancor and envy; and after another 9 years he made another attempt on his life. It happened as follows. A certain Khitayan laid claim to properties of holiness and chastity and had made himself known in the *ordos* for his asceticism and piety. One day he pretended to be ill and sent some of his disciples to the emirs to say: "I shall die and come to life again after 40 days." They went and said this, and some people were sent to investigate. He was lying in his house in the manner of the dead and his children were mourning and lamenting over him. They thought that he was really dead, but after 40 days he came out and put about the story that he had come to life again. The Khitayans rallied around him and his affairs prospered greatly. Gau Finjan and the people of Daidu now went to him and consulted him about getting rid of the Emir Ahmad. As he was

extremely cautious and alert, always having guards with him and his sleeping-place not being known, they decided to send two thousand men to a valley known as Chamchiyal, 4 parasangs from Daidu, in order to hold it, whilst a thousand men should go and spread the rumor that Jim-Gim was coming, so that the Emir Ahmad might come out to meet him and they might kill him.

Gau Finjan seated himself in a palanquin, for it is a custom of the rulers of those parts sometimes to sit in a palanquin and they often travel this way by night. And from that valley relays of heralds and messengers were dispatched to announce that Jim-Gim was coming. Ahmad was afraid of him. And all the men he sent in advance they killed. In the night they entered [the town] with torches and candles as is the custom of their rulers. When they drew near to the *qarshi*, the Emir Ahmad came out to take a cup, and they seized him and put him to death. As for the Emir Tergen, who was his *nökter*, he had acted with caution and had guessed that something was wrong. Standing at a distance with his *nökters* he took an arrow and shot Gau Finjan dead in the palanquin. The Khitayans fled and Tergen occupied the *qarshi*. There was a great deal of slaughter and tumult in the night, and the Khitayans went out [and hid themselves] in corners.

When this was reported to the Qa'an, he dispatched the Emir Bolad Aqa and Hanum Noyan at the head of an army to execute all of the Khitayans who had caused this disturbance. And he ordered 4,000 *balish* to be paid for the Emir Ahmad's funeral expenses and sent the great men and emirs to bury him with full honors.

Forty days later, the Qa'an sent for a large stone to set in his crown. It could not be found. Two merchants, who were there, came and said: "Previously we had brought a large stone for the Qa'an and [had] given it to the Emir Ahmad." The Qa'an said: "He did not bring it to me." And he sent to have it fetched from his house. It was found on his wife Inju Khatun and brought to the Qa'an. He was extremely annoyed and asked the merchants what should be the punishment of a slave who committed such a crime. They replied: "If alive he should be put to death, and if dead he should be taken out of his grave and publicly exposed as a warning to others." And the Khitayans for their part said to Jim-Gim: "He was thy enemy, and it was for that reason that we killed him." For that reason they had planted enmity toward him in the Qa'an's heart. Therefore, he ordered his

body to be taken out of the grave and hanged in the market place by a rope tied to the feet, whilst wagons were driven over his head. Igiti, his wife, was also put to death, and the forty other wives and four hundred concubines that he had were given away, whilst his possessions and effects were expropriated for the treasury. As for his sons, the Emir Hasan and the Emir Husain, they were beaten until the skin came off, while his other children were given away. After [Ahmad's] death, the vizierate was conferred upon an Uighur called Senge. * * *

The Successors of Genghis Khan, translated by John Boyle (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 120, 168–70, 211–12, 215–16, 256–57, 291–93.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did the conflict of Batu and Güyük reveal about problems for the Mongols? How would this struggle prefigure fragmentation of the Mongol Empire?
2. Why was the author so impressed with Sorghaghtani Beki? What role did she play in changes of Mongol attitudes toward governance?
3. What does Mahmud Yalavach's story disclose about the Muslim elite's knowledge of the world?
4. What were the larger implications of Möngke's purge? Whom was he purging?
5. Why would the author portray Arigh Böke in such a negative light?
6. One Mongol tradition was that the youngest son, in this case Arigh Böke, should be the successor. With Khubilai's defeat of Arigh Böke, how would many Mongols view Khubilai? How could this shape Khubilai's reign?

FOR FURTHER READING

Over the past three decades, increased interest in global history, as well as the excitement associated with the names “Chinggis Khan” and “Mongols,” have spurred the writing of popular and scholarly books on the Mongol empire. Numerous articles have also appeared, but I will mention only books in this guide to further reading on the Mongols because journal essays are not readily accessible. Availability has been, for me, an important consideration in the compilation of this guide. Readability is another factor. I have chosen books that nonspecialist readers or college students can read comfortably and productively, and I have omitted works that are highly philological or are studied with lengthy notes of use to scholars but not highly illuminating for the general reader. I have kept the nonspecialist reader in mind in making these suggestions and thus include some reliable popularizations.

General Works

An excellent map of the Mongol empire at its height may be found in the December 1996 issue of *National Geographic*.

Atwood, Christopher. *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*. New York: Facts on File, 2004. A general survey of the Mongol empire, with an accurate listing of names and dates.

Barfield, Thomas. *The Perilous Frontier*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1989. An anthropological analysis and interpretation of the role of the Mongols and other pastoral nomads in East Asian history.