

# THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS

*A Mongolian Epic Chronicle  
of the Thirteenth Century*

TRANSLATED WITH A HISTORICAL,  
AND PHILOLOGICAL COMMENTARY

BY

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# THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS

## CHAPTER ONE

The origins of Činggis Qa'an.

*At the beginning* there was a blue-grey<sup>1</sup> wolf, born with his destiny *ordained* by Heaven Above. His wife was a fallow doe. They came crossing the Tenggis.<sup>2</sup> After they had settled at the source of the Onan River on *Mount Burqan Qaldun*, Batačiqan was born to them.

The son of Batačiqan was Tamača; the son of Tamača, Qoričar Mergen; the son of Qoričar Mergen, A'užam Boro'ul; the son of A'užam Boro'ul, Sali Qača'u; the son of Sali Qača'u, Yeke Nidün; the son of Yeke Nidün, Sem Soči; the son of Sem Soči, Qarču.

The son of Qarču, Borjigidai Mergen, had as wife Mongqoljin Qo'a. The son of Borjigidai Mergen, Toroqoljin Bayan, had a wife *named* Boroqčın Qo'a, a young lad<sup>3</sup> *named* Boroldai Suyalbi, and two fine geldings, Dayir and Boro.<sup>4</sup> Toroqoljin had two sons, Du'a Soqor and Dobun Mergen.

Du'a Soqor had a single eye in the middle of his forehead: with it he could see for a distance of three stages.<sup>5</sup>

One day Du'a Soqor went up Burqan Qaldun with his younger brother Dobun Mergen. Du'a Soqor looked out

<sup>1</sup> See the Commentary.

<sup>2</sup> I.t., 'the Sea' or (fig.) 'a large body of water' such as a great lake, possibly *Huikui*.

<sup>3</sup> I.e., a young manservant.

<sup>4</sup> I.e., 'Dusky' and 'Grey.'

<sup>5</sup> A 'stage' (*tu'iti*) is the distance between two nomadic camps.

from the top of Burqan Qaldun, and, as he did so,<sup>1</sup> he saw  
*in the distance* a band of people on the move who, fol-  
 lowing the course<sup>2</sup> of the Tüנגgelik Stream, were coming  
 6 that way. He said, 'Among those people on the move who  
 are coming this way, there is a fine girl in the front seat of a  
 black covered cart.<sup>3</sup> If she has not been given to *another*  
 man, we shall ask her for you, my younger brother Dobun  
 Mergen!' So saying, he sent his younger brother Dobun  
 Mergen to have a look.

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

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

9 As in their land the Qori Tumat had imposed bans  
 on one another's sable, squirrel and wild game<sup>5</sup> *hunting*  
 grounds, and mutual relations were bad *as a result*,  
 Qorilartai Mergen *separated from the Qori Tumat* and took  
 the clan name Qorilar. Saying that the land of Burqan  
 Qaldun was good, and that it was suitable for game hunting,  
 he was *now* moving into *the territory* of the Uriangqai  
 Burqan Bosqaqsan and Šinči Bayan, lords of Burqan  
 Qaldun.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lit., 'when he looked.'

<sup>2</sup> I.e., downstream.

<sup>3</sup> I.e., a cart covered with black felt.

<sup>4</sup> I.e., 'Clear Water (= River or Spring).'

<sup>5</sup> I.e., mainly deer, antelopes and wild goats.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Or 'Hills.'

<sup>2</sup> Lit., 'Friend, the roast!'

<sup>3</sup> I.e., the head, trachea, lungs and heart.

were named Buqu Qatagi, Buqatu Salji and Bodončar Mungqaq.<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

How can you speak so rashly?

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

They are the sons of Heaven.

How can you speak, comparing them

<sup>1</sup> I.e., 'Bodončar the Fool (*or* Simpleton)'

<sup>2</sup> Lit., 'behind the back of their mother.'

To *ordinary* black-headed men?  
 When they become the rulers of all,  
 Then the common people will understand!’

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

23 After the death of their mother Alan Qo’a, the five brothers divided the livestock<sup>1</sup> among themselves. Belgünütei, Bügünütei, Buqu Qatagi and Buqatu Salji all took *their share*; to Bodončar no share was given, for they said that he was a fool and a half-wit, and they did not regard him as one of the family.

24 Bodončar, seeing that he was no longer counted as one of the family, said, ‘Why should I stay here?’ He got on a white horse with a black sore back and a mangy tail.<sup>2</sup> ‘If I die, I die; if I live, I live!’<sup>3</sup> he said and left riding fast downstream along the Onan River. He went on and when he reached Baljun Aral<sup>4</sup> he built a grass hut<sup>5</sup> and made his home there.

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

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<sup>1</sup> I.e., the family property.

<sup>2</sup> Lit., ‘with a black stripe along the backbone, mid-back saddle-sores, and a hairless tail.’

<sup>3</sup> Or: ‘If he dies, I will die; if he lives, I will live!’

<sup>4</sup> *Aral* means ‘island’ as well as ‘peninsula.’ See the Commentary.

<sup>5</sup> Lit., ‘a grass hut tent.’

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

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

Every tree stump reeked with their stench,  
Every dead tree with their foul smell.

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

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> I.e., through that winter.



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

33 Bodončar, who was trotting behind his elder brother Buqu Qatagi, said on the way, 'Elder brother, elder brother, it is right for a body to have a head, and for a coat to have a collar.'<sup>1</sup> His elder brother Buqu Qatagi did not attach  
34 any importance to these words of his. When he repeated the same words, his elder brother *again* ignored them and did not answer. Further along, Bodončar once more uttered the same words, to which his elder brother said, 'What kind of words are those you have just been repeating?'  
35 Then Bodončar said, 'These people of a short while ago who are staying on the Tünggelik Stream make no distinction between great and small, bad and good, high and mean:<sup>2</sup> they are all equal. They are people easy to  
36 *capture*. Let us raid them!' His elder brother then said, 'Right. If this is so, as soon as we reach home let us consult with our brothers and raid those people!'

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

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

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

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

<sup>2</sup> Lit., 'head and hoof.'

40 The woman who was mid-way through pregnancy came to Bodončar and gave birth to a son. As he was the son of strangers, they named him Jařiradai. He was the ancestor of the Jařaran.<sup>1</sup> The son of that Jařaradai<sup>2</sup> was named Tügü'üdei. The son of Tügü'üdei was Būri Bulčiru. The son of Būri Bulčiru was Qara Qada'an. The son of Qara Qada'an was Jařamuqa. These took the clan name Jařaran.

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

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

43 From the wife that Bodončar himself had taken was born a son named Barim Ši'iratu Qabiči. Bodončar *also* took as concubine a housemaid of Qabiči Ba'atur's mother, who had come as dowry. She had a son by him named Je'üredei. At first Je'üredei could take part in the *Jügeli sacrifice in which meat is hung on a pole and offered to*  
 44 *Heaven.* After Bodončar's death he was excluded from it<sup>5</sup> because – so they said – the Adangqa Uriangqai man<sup>6</sup> was constantly in the house and Je'üredei was probably his *son*. They made him take the clan name Je'üreyit and he became the ancestor of the Je'üret.

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<sup>1</sup> These personal and clan names are explained, in popular etymology, from the word *jař* (*jad*) meaning 'foreign.'

<sup>2</sup> The 'Jařaradai' or 'man of the Jařaran *clan*' is, of course, Jařiradai.

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

<sup>4</sup> *Mene metü* – hence the association with the clan name Menen.

<sup>5</sup> Lit., 'they excluded that Je'üredei from the *Jügeli*.'

<sup>6</sup> Bodončar's son by his Adangqa Uriangqai wife, i.e. Jařiradai.

- 45 The son of Qabiči Ba'atur was Menen Tudun. The sons of Menen Tudun were Qači Külüč, Qačin, Qači'u, Qačula, Qači'un, Qaraldai and Način Ba'atur.
- 46 The son of Qači Külüč, Qaidu, was born of Mother Nomolun. The son of Qačin was named Noyagidai; because, by nature, he liked to act as a chief, *his descendants* took the clan name Noyakin. The son of Qači'u was named Barulatai. He had a big body and was a voracious eater; *therefore, his descendants* took the clan name Barulas. As the sons of Qačula were *also* voracious eaters, they were named Yeke Barula and Üčügen Barula;<sup>1</sup> they *too* had to take the clan name Barulas and it is these who became the Erdemtü Barula, the Tödö'en Barula and the other Barulas. The sons of Qaraldai did not observe seniority when they cooked<sup>2</sup> porridge; *therefore, their descendants* took the clan name Buda'at. The son of Qači'un was named Adarkidai; because he spread slanders among his elder and younger brothers, *his descendants* took the clan name Adargin. The sons of Način Ba'atur were named Uru'udai and Mangqutai; they took the clan names Uru'ut and Mangqut. Those *sons* of Način Ba'atur who were borne by the wife he himself had taken, were named Šiju'udai and Doqoladai.
- 47 The sons of Qaidu were Bai Šingqor Doqšin, Čaraqai Lingqu and Čaujin Öртеgei. The son of Bai Šingqor Doqšin was Tumbinai Sečen. The son of Čaraqai Lingqu was Senggüm Bilge; *his descendants*, [beginning with] Senggüm Bilge's son Ambaqai [Qa'an], took the clan name Tayiči'ut. From a sister-in-law of Čaraqai Lingqu *who became his wife* was born *a son* named Besütei. *His descendants* took the clan name Besüt. The sons of Čaujin Öртеgei *and their descendants* took the clan names Oronar, Qongqotan, Arulat, Sönit, Qabturqas and Geniges.

<sup>1</sup> I.e., 'Big Barula' and 'Small Barula.'

<sup>2</sup> I.e., 'stirred.'

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

49 The son of Ökin Barqaq was Qutuqtu Yürki.<sup>1</sup> Qutuqtu Yürki's sons were Seče Beki<sup>2</sup> and Taiču. These took the clan name Yürki.

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

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> For this (incorrect) name, see the Commentary.

<sup>2</sup> Written Sača Beki elsewhere in the text.

<sup>3</sup> For this episode, see below, § 131.

<sup>4</sup> See below, § 169.

and of<sup>1</sup> *my* ten sons speak to Qada'an Taiši.' And he sent saying, 'When you become<sup>2</sup> *qa'an* of all and lord of the people, *learn* from my *example* and beware of taking your daughter in person to *her betrothed*. I have been seized by the Tatars.

Until the nails of your five fingers  
Are ground down,  
Until your ten fingers are worn away,  
Strive to revenge me!

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

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

In the front seat *of every cart*  
There are girls;  
In every black cart  
There are women.

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

<sup>1</sup> Lit., 'among.'

<sup>2</sup> I.e., 'When either of you becomes...'

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

56 The three *men* rode after him, chased him across seven hills and came back. Yisügei Ba'atur took the halter and guided *the cart of* Lady Hö'elün; his elder brother, Nekün Taiši, led the way, and his younger brother, Dāritai Otčigin, rode alongside the shaft *of the cart*. As they were proceeding, Lady Hö'elün said, 'My good lord<sup>1</sup> Čiledü is one

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

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

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

Dāritai Otčigin, riding beside her, said,

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

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Lit., 'elder brother', here a respectful term for 'husband'

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

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

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

To take revenge,  
To requite the wrong  
*for the slaying of Ambaqai Qa'an.*

59 Then Yisügei Ba'atur captured the Tatars Temüjin Üge, Qori Buqa, and other Tatars. At that time Lady Hö'elün was pregnant, and as she was *staying* at Deli'ün Boldaq<sup>1</sup> by the Onan, it was right there that Činggis Qa'an was born. At the time of his birth he was born clutching in his right hand a clot of blood the size of a knucklebone. Because he was born when the Tatar Temüjin Üge had been brought *captive*, for this *very* reason they gave him the name Temüjin.

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

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

<sup>1</sup> I.e., 'Spleen Hill.'

<sup>2</sup> Or Sučigil.

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

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

Who has fire in his eyes,

Who has light in his face.

63 ‘*Quda* Yisügci, I had a dream last night, I did. A white gerfalcon clasping both sun and moon *in its claws* flew to me and perched on my hand. I told the people about this dream of mine, saying, “*Before*, when I looked, I could *only* see the sun and the moon *from afar*; now this gerfalcon has brought them to me and has perched on my hand. He has alighted, *all* white. Just what sort of good *thing* does this show?” I had my dream, *quda* Yisügei, just as you were coming here bringing your son. I had a dream of good *omen*. What kind of dream is it? The august spirit of you, Kiyat people, has come *in my dream*<sup>1</sup> and has announced<sup>2</sup> *your visit*.

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

<sup>1</sup> I.e., as an omen of good fortune for the Onggirat people.

<sup>2</sup> I.e., has foretold.



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

From old days, the Onggirat people  
 Have the *qatuns* as shields,  
 Have their daughters as intercessors.  
 We live thanks to the good looks  
 Of our granddaughters  
 And the beauty of our daughters.

65 With our boys, *when they seek a bride*,  
 One<sup>1</sup> looks at *the wealth of* our camp;  
 With our girls, *when they are sought as brides*,  
 One<sup>2</sup> considers *only* their beauty.

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

66 When Yisügei saw his daughter, he saw a girl  
 Who had light in her face,  
 Who had fire in her eyes.

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

<sup>1</sup> I.e., the family of the bride.

<sup>2</sup> I.e., the family of the bridegroom.

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

67 On the way *back*, Yisügei Ba'atur met some Tatars who were having a feast in the Šira Ke'er<sup>1</sup> by *Mount Čekčer*. As he was thirsty, he got off his horse *and joined them* at the feast. But those Tatars recognized him: 'Yisügei the Kiyān has come,' they said, and remembered their grievance for his former raid upon them. With the secret intent to harm, they gave him poison<sup>2</sup> mixing it *with his food*. On the way  
68 *back*, Yisügei Ba'atur felt ill. He went on, and when after three days<sup>3</sup> he reached his tent, being in a bad way, he<sup>4</sup> said, 'I feel sick within me. Who is at hand?' When they told him that Mōnglik, the son of Old Čaraqa of the Qongqotat, was close by, he called him, made him come and said to him, 'Mōnglik my boy, I have young children. I left my son Temüjin to be a son-in-law and, as I was coming back, I was secretly harmed by Tatar people on the way. I feel sick within me. You take care of your younger brothers,<sup>5</sup> the little ones that I leave behind, and of your widowed elder sister-in-law.<sup>5</sup> Go quickly and bring back my son Temüjin, Mōnglik my boy!' He spoke and passed away.

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<sup>1</sup> I.e., 'Yellow Steppe (or Plain).'

<sup>2</sup> Or, possibly, 'they grievously injured him' by mixing poison with his food.

<sup>3</sup> Lit., 'three days and nights.'

<sup>4</sup> Lit., 'Yisügei Ba'atur.'

<sup>5</sup> For these figurative terms, see the Commentary. Cf. also below, § 272.