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The curious case of the iniquitous in-laws: Oirat disloyalty in Mongol Iran

Tobias Xavier Jones 

Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands
Email: tobiasxjones@gmail.com

Abstract

The Oirats were key supporters of the Mongol enterprise and helped to bring Chinggis Khan to power. Chinggis and his family intermarried with the royal lineage of the Oirats who were descended from Qutuqa Beki. As these marriages continued throughout Mongol history, descendants of Qutuqa Beki and Chinggis's daughter Checheyigen became key supporters of various successor khanates. In the Ilkhanate of Iran, one of their relatives, Tanggiz Küregen, and his family were intimately connected with the ruling house. The importance of Oirat military support for the Ilkhanid government was to such an extent that he and his descendants were regularly pardoned for treasonous acts. While other elite lineages such as the Juvainis, the family of Arghun Aqa, and the Chupanids all had had great power and influence, they met violent ends at the hands of their Ilkhanid rulers. Tanggiz and his descendants however, were not only not overly punished for their acts of *lèse-majesté*, but in fact outlived the Ilkhanid Dynasty itself. This culminated in the government of 'Alī Pādshāh, who ruled much of the former Ilkhanid realm through a puppet khan for a short period in 1336. This article investigates how Oirat power was both central to the Ilkhanid regime and helped cause its downfall.

Keywords: Ilkhanids; Oirats; *küregen*; loyalty; family

Introduction

This article discusses an important lineage in the Mongol empire—the royal family of the Oirats. The Oirats were key supporters of Chinggis Khan in his rise to power and, for this, he made them marriage partners to his own family. Their ruler Qutuqa Beki and his descendants played a vital role in both the establishment of the early Mongol state and its further conquests, as well as marrying back into the Chinggisid house for generations. One branch of this lineage, beginning with a man named Tanggiz, joined the Chinggisid prince Hülegü as he established himself in Iran and regular intermarriages ensued. These descendants—part of the elite *küregen* (son-in-law) class—served the rulers of the Ilkhanate until its collapse in the 1330s. However, they regularly acted against the interests of their rulers and yet were never executed for their treasonous behaviour, unlike so many others, contributing to the downfall of the Ilkhanate. While interest in the *küregen* class has been growing in Mongol studies, the lineage of

Tanggiz and their complex relationship to the Ilkhanid state has not yet been fully analysed.¹

Many people learned the hard way that the Mongols reacted very strongly to opposition, disobedience, and disloyalty. One could say that it was one of their trademarks. We have numerous examples of the Mongols executing disloyal subjects in myriad unpleasant ways. The principle was a sound one—and one that many rulers over the centuries have followed. The Mongols ensured that their subjects were well aware of what it meant to be in submission to them, refusing their professions of fealty if the conditions of submission had not been met.² However, there was a qualitative difference in how the subjects of the Mongols were treated and how the Chinggisid family—the *altan urugh* (golden lineage)—were dealt with. Chinggisid family members of course were executed at times when they rebelled or unsuccessfully challenged for the throne. The expectation in this regard was that a death sentence required the consensus of the Chinggisid family—the *aqā-ini* (older and younger brothers)—though, practically, this often did not take place.³ Nonetheless, there seems to have existed a general rule of thumb that members of the Chinggisid house would have their lives spared even if they rebelled, though they were often sent into dangerous combat zones as part of their punishment.⁴ The blood of the royal family was seen as sacred and, at least in the early period of Mongol rule, Chinggisid rulers often preserved this idea, as it also served as a deterrent against non-Chinggisids' simply executing members of the family when it pleased them.

However, the Chinggisid family was made up of not only those men and women who were descended from the conqueror, but also those who became associated with it through marriage. The men who did so were the *küregen*, whose support was vital to Temüjin in his quest to become Chinggis Khan. These men and their families formed a group of elites in the Mongol empire and were regularly given high positions, while their descendants were established as marriage partners for Chinggisid princes and princesses. These marriages could be more or less prestigious, based on the patrilineal and matrilineal descent lines. The *küregen* were regularly used as generals on campaigns, with large forces under their control.⁵ In some cases, alongside their Chinggisid wives, they ruled over certain areas semi-autonomously for decades.⁶ They were therefore

¹ Notable works on the *küregen*: A. Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire* (Cambridge, 2018); and A. Broadbridge, 'Marriage, family and politics: the Ilkhanid-Oirat connection', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26.1–2 (2016), pp. 121–135; G. Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy and Cultural Expression: Mongolian Royal Marriages from World Empire to Yuan Dynasty* (New York, 2008); C. Atwood, 'Chikü Küregen and the Origins of the Xiningzhou Qonggirads', *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, 21 (2014–2015), pp. 7–26; and Ishayahu Landa's various articles, such as 'Reconsidering the Chinggisids' sons-in-laws: lessons from the united empire', *Chronica, Annual of the Institute of History*, 18 (2018), pp. 212–225; and 'Türaqai Güregen (d. 1296–7) and his lineage: history of a cross-Asia journey', *Asia* 71.4 (2017), pp. 1189–1211, as well as his forthcoming volume *Marriage and Power in Mongol Eurasia*.

² T. Jones, 'Mongol Loyalty Networks: Cultural Transmission and Chinggisid Innovation' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Leiden University, 2023), p. 44.

³ 'Ala-ad-Din 'Ata Malik Juvaini, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, (trans.) J. A. Boyle (Manchester, 1958), vol. I, p. 255 (hereafter Juvaini/Boyle), on the execution of Temüge Otchigin after trial; Juvaini/Boyle, vol. II, p. 588, on the executions of various Chaghadaid and Ögödeid princes and khatuns in 1251. For criticisms, see Broadbridge, *Women*, pp. 206, 220.

⁴ Juvaini/Boyle, vol. II, p. 592; Rashiduddin Fazlullah, *Jami'u't-Tawarikh, Compendium of Chronicles: A History of the Mongols*, (trans.) W. M. Thackston (Harvard, MA, 1999), vol. II, pp. 367, 433 (hereafter RAD/Thackston).

⁵ Broadbridge, *Women*, p. 136.

⁶ Atwood, 'Chikü Küregen', p. 9, shows that Chinggisid princesses and their Qonggirat consorts ruled over the area of Xīníngzhōu in the west of the Yuán realm until the end of Mongol rule there.

respected quasi-members of the family and could even be given priority over Chinggisids in rituals such as the *quriltai*.⁷

The most notable groups of *quda* (marriage partner houses) were the Oirat, Qonggirat, and Kereit royal families, though other loyal retainers could be favoured with a marriage into the Chinggisid house. As groups of these marriage families joined their in-laws on campaigns, they formed special relationships with particular Chinggisid houses, such as the Oirat with the descendants of Tolui, especially in the Ilkhanate of Iran.⁸ It is one Oirat lineage in particular that is analysed here. In doing so, we can come to a better understanding of the changing position of a *küregen* family over time. This case study allows a more nuanced vision of the *küregen* institution as a whole, showing how the political dynamics in the late Ilkhanate favoured the improved situation of Tanggiz's descendants.

Background and family dynamics

The relationship began shortly after Chinggis' recognition as ruler of the steppe in 1206, with Chinggis contracting a marriage alliance between his daughter Checheyigen and either Törelchi or Inalchi (then given the title *küregen*), sons of the ruler of the Oirat, Qutuqa Beki, in 1207.⁹ This was a turning point, as the relationship had previously been a hostile one. Qutuqa Beki had supported Temüjin's great rival Jamuqa as *gürkhan*, alongside other implacable enemies of the young lord, the Tatars and the Tayichi'ut. This confederation faced Temüjin and his patron Toghril of the Kereit at the battle of Köyiten, where Qutuqa Beki was in the vanguard of Jamuqa's forces. Qutuqa was also famed for his magical abilities, being able to manipulate the *jada* or rain-stone, although, in this instance, it backfired on him.¹⁰ Jamuqa's army was defeated and his coalition quickly dissolved, with Qutuqa Beki fleeing with his Oirat troops.¹¹ Chinggis was never one to pass up the opportunity to get mystical powers behind him, and it may have been a reason that he was keen to win over Qutuqa peaceably, alongside the political and military value of such an ally. By this point, Qutuqa could clearly see the winning side and, when Jochi was sent on his expedition to the Peoples of the Forest (*Hoyin Irgen*) in 1207, Qutuqa rendered submission early. This submission was influential in bringing the rest of the Oirats, as well as other groups of the *Hoyin Irgen* such as the Tumat and the Kirghiz, under Chinggis's banner without bloodshed. For this action, Qutuqa's family became *quda* to that of Chinggis.¹²

⁷ RAD/Thackston, vol. I, p. 86, indicates that descendants of Dai Noyan of the Qonggirat were seated above the sons of Chinggis's family; I. Landa, 'Imperial sons-in-law on the move: Oyirad and Qonggirat dispersion in Mongol Eurasia', *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 22 (2016), p. 183.

⁸ Broadbridge, 'Marriage, family, politics', *passim*; however, as Landa, 'Reconsidering the Chinggisids', p. 220 shows, the lineage of Buqa Temü married into all the Chinggisid princely lineages.

⁹ I. de Rachewiltz (trans.), *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century* (Leiden, 2004), §239, pp. 163–164 (hereafter SHM/de Rachewiltz) Inalchi; RAD/Thackston, vol. I, p. 55, Törelchi, saying that Inalchi married Jochi's daughter Qului Egechi. Rashid al-Din's version seems more logical, with the elder son (Törelchi) marrying the higher-status wife, Chinggis's own daughter Checheyigen, rather than Jochi's daughter. The use of *egechi* for a Chinggisid princess is perplexing, as it was a title used for concubines. Landa, 'Türaqai Güregen', p. 1190, mistakenly says that Jochi married Qului, a daughter of Qutuqa; however, the correct associations are given in Landa, 'Imperial sons-in-law', p. 185; Broadbridge, 'Marriage, family, politics', p. 123.

¹⁰ For more on this phenomenon, see Á. Molnár, *Weather Magic in Inner Asia* (Bloomington, IN, 1994), *passim*.

¹¹ SHM/de Rachewiltz, §141–144, pp. 63–5. RAD/Thackston, vol. I, p. 202, indicates that Qutuqa Beki was also later in support of Tayang Khan of the Naiman against Chinggis, though this was not mentioned by the SHM. See Landa, 'Reconsidering the Chinggisids', p. 218.

¹² SHM/de Rachewiltz, §239, pp. 163–164.

Various other marriages were arranged among the two royal houses to tie them closer together. One of these was the betrothal of Tanggiz, an unspecified relation of Qutuqa Beki, to an unnamed daughter of Güyük Qa'an (r. 1246–1248). The Persian text of Rashīd al-Dīn on this point states: 'az jumla umarā va kūragānān ki bā muqaddam-i qawm-i ūyrāt qūtūqa biki khvīshī dārānd, yikī tanggiz kūragān būda, among the amirs and küregens who were related to the leader of the Oirat people, Qutuqa Beki, one was Tanggiz Küregen.'¹³ We receive no further information about Tanggiz's background. Given that we know (a) he was accused of supporting the Ögödeid coup in the early 1250s, (b) his grandson Ajai, a son of Hülegü and Tanggiz's daughter, a concubine Arighan Egechi, attended Hülegü on his western campaign beginning in 1253 where they were in charge of the camp of Hülegü's wife Qutui Khatun, and (c) Tanggiz was alive in 1284 when Arghun succeeded, we can hypothesise that Tanggiz was likely born in the 1220s. His marriage to Tödögech, a daughter of Hülegü by an unnamed concubine from the *ordu* of Doquz Khatun, may indicate Tanggiz's more junior status among the descendants of Qutuqa Beki, but also could be due to his previous support for Güyük.

Soon, however, Tanggiz and his family were to become intimately connected to the Ilkhanid house of Hülegü in what Anne Broadbridge has called the 'junior' line of Oirat–Ilkhanid relationships.¹⁴ Tanggiz himself remarried after his Ögödeid wife passed away, marrying Tödögech. Meanwhile, Tanggiz and his Ögödeid wife had had a daughter, Qutluğ Khatun, who became the first wife of Arghun, the fourth ruler of the Ilkhanate (r. 1284–1291).¹⁵ The relationship with Tanggiz's line continued through the practice of levirate marriage whereby sons or younger brothers of a deceased man inherited his wives. Therefore, first Tanggiz's son Sülemish and then his grandson Cheчек subsequently married Tödögech. Sülemish and Tödögech had a daughter, Öljetei, who also married Arghun.¹⁶ These confusing intermarriages did not stop here either, with Cheчек, the grandson of Tanggiz, and Tödögech, having several children themselves, one of whom was a daughter called Hājji who married the penultimate Ilkhan Öljeitü (r. 1304–1316) and gave birth to Öljeitü's only son to reach maturity—the last widely recognised Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd (r. 1316–1335).¹⁷ Abū Sa'īd himself connected back into the line, marrying Malika Khatun, the daughter of one Tuqa s. Sülemish s. Tanggiz.¹⁸ Another son of Cheчек and Tödögech, 'Alī Pādshāh, in 1336 briefly raised his own puppet khan, Mūsa, in Baghdad, before being defeated and killed by Shaykh Ḥasan Buzurg of the

¹³ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-tavārikh (Tārikh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzāni)*, (ed.) Mohammad Raushan and Mostafa Mousavi (Tehran, 1395/2016), p. 94 (hereafter RAD/Raushan). Author's translation.

¹⁴ Broadbridge, 'Marriage, family, politics', p. 132, the 'senior' being that of Buqa Temür's family, though Landa, 'Tūraqai Güregen', pp. 1194–1196, shows that this lineage fell from grace from Abaqā's reign.

¹⁵ RAD/Thackston, vol. I, p. 56.

¹⁶ As Broadbridge, 'Marriage, family, politics', p. 131, has shown, there is disagreement in our sources as to Öljetei's parentage. RAD/Thackston, vol. II, p. 561 says she was the daughter of Sülemish and Tödögech. Abū al-Qāsim 'Abdallāh ibn Muḥammad al-Qāshāni, *Tārikh-i Ūljāytū*, (ed.) M. Hambali (Tehran, 1384/2005), pp. 7–8 (hereafter Qāshāni/Hambali), says that she was a full sister of Hājji Khatun; Dāwūd b. Abī al-Faẓl Banākātī, *Tārikh-i Rawzat Ūlī'l-albāb fī Ma'rafat al-Tavārikh wa'l-Ansāb*, (ed.) Ja'far She'ar (Tehran, 1348/1969), pp. 473, 477, says that the father was Sülemish, Hājji Khan's (Khatun) sister. Banākātī has 'Küregen' as father of Hājji, but later states that Hājji Khatun was a daughter of Sülemish.

¹⁷ For another explanation of this tortuous family tree, see Broadbridge, 'Marriage, family, politics', p. 131. Qāshāni/Hambali, p. 7, has Hājji's father as Zāhhāk, son of Tanggiz, but, as Melville points out, this is clearly a mistake for Cheчек; C. Melville, 'The fall of Amir Chupan and the decline of the ilkhanate, 1327–37: a decade of discord in Mongol Iran', *Papers on Inner Asia*, No. 30 (Bloomington, IN, 1999), p. 47, note 138; Banākātī, p. 473, follows Qāshāni and, not able to make out the name either, leaves the space blank.

¹⁸ *Mu'izz al-Ansāb*, MS. Persan 67, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, folio 78a (hereafter MA/Paris). This wife is not included in the family trees provided by either Melville or Broadbridge. My thanks to Michael Hope for pointing this out to me.

Jalayirids.¹⁹ ‘Alī Pādshāh’s brother Muḥammad Beg seems to have been the last *küregen* of the line, marrying a daughter of the Ilkhan Gaykhatu (r. 1291–1295) called Qutluḡ Mulk (Figure 1).²⁰

The career of Tanggiz Küregen

While the family dynamics alone are fascinating and have been elaborated on elsewhere, this article seeks to track the careers of these in-laws and show how, despite their frequently poor political choices, they were kept close to the family.²¹ From the start, this line of the Oirat was not associated with the Toluids. It was rather the more ‘senior’ line of Törelchi Küregen and Checheyigen that was most intimately linked with them. Tanggiz, meanwhile, married a daughter of Güyük Qa’an, the son of Ögödei.²² Rashīd al-Dīn does not know, or does not choose to record, this daughter’s name, which may indicate that perhaps it was not the most prestigious marriage or the historian wished to downplay it. We must remember that it was the Ögödeids who were the ruling house in the Mongol empire at the time, and thus Tanggiz could have been very close to the heart of power during Güyük’s reign, depending on the status of his wife.²³

In a seemingly devastating blow to Tanggiz’s career, the Ögödeids were overthrown by their Jochid and Toluid cousins, and Möngke, Tolui’s eldest son, became qa’an in 1251. Rashīd al-Dīn specifies that, when Möngke investigated the subsequent ‘revolt’ of Güyük’s family against his rule, many of the officers involved were put to death. Tanggiz, however, was beaten ‘until the flesh fell from his thighs’, but was spared his life upon the entreaties of his unnamed wife.²⁴ We can only speculate as to why an Ögöeid princess was so well regarded that she could save her husband after her family’s fall from grace. Not only this, but her daughter Qutluḡ became the chief wife of the Ilkhan Arghun. Other women associated with the Ögöeid house, Oghul Gaimish and Qadaqach Khatun, had been brutally executed, though they were not themselves

¹⁹ Abū Bakr al-Quṭbī Al-Aḥarī, *Ta’rikh-i Shaikh Uwais (History of Shaikh Uwais): An Important Source for the History of Adharbajian in the Fourteenth Century*, (trans.) J. B. van Loon (‘s-Gravenhage, 1954), Persian text pp. 159–162, English translation pp. 60–63 (hereafter Aḥarī/van Loon). Melville, ‘Fall of Amir Chupan’, p. 51, shows that two other sons of Chechek, Muḥammad Beg and Ḥāfīz, supported ‘Alī Pādshāh.

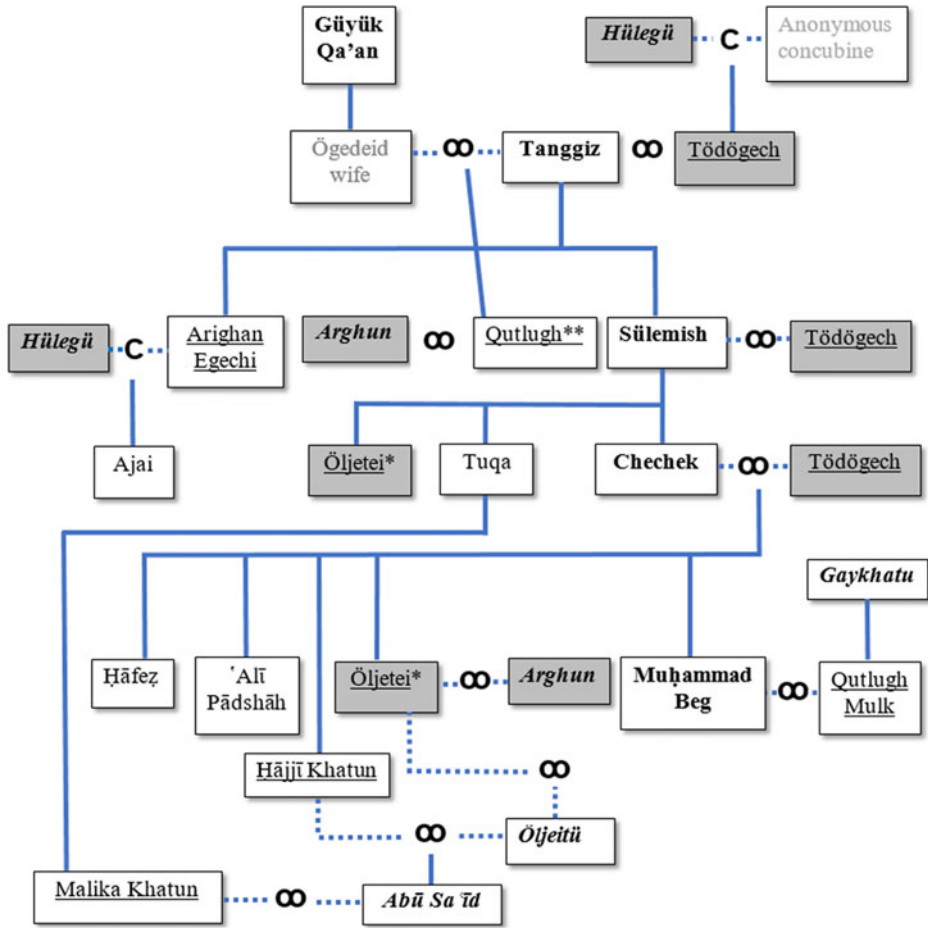
²⁰ Aḥarī/van Loon, Persian text p. 163, English translation p. 64. The Mongol and Timurid genealogical tables disagree as to the marriage of Qutluḡ Mulk. The *Shu’ab-i Panjgāna* has Qutluḡ Mulk married to Amir Qutluḡshāh of the Manghit while her sister Il Qutluḡ married Qurumshi, son of Alinaq, *Shu’ab-i panjgāneh* MS: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS. Ahmet 2937, folio 146b (hereafter SP/Istanbul). MA/Paris, folio 70a, whose author Ḥāfīz Abrū based his work on the *Shu’ab-i Panjgāna*, has a different version in which Qutluḡ Mulk was married to Qurumshi, son of Alinaq, and Il Qutluḡ to Amir Qutluḡshāh. Qutluḡshāh’s marriage to Il Qutluḡ is confirmed in RAD/Thackston, vol. III, p. 650. Melville, ‘Fall of Amir Chupan’, p. 56, note 168, squares this away by saying that Qutluḡ Mulk likely married Muḥammad Beg after Qurumshi’s execution in the amirs’ revolt of 1319.

²¹ For the family dynamics, see Broadbridge, ‘Marriage, family, politics’, *passim*.

²² RAD/Thackston, vol. I, pp. 55–56.

²³ Rashīd al-Dīn is quite sparing in his information on Güyük’s family, where only the chief wife Oghul Gaimish is mentioned, while no daughters are recorded, RAD/Thackston, vol. II, pp. 389–396. We have information about two of Güyük’s daughters, Yelimiḡ (葉里迷失) and Babahaer (巴巴哈兒), who married, respectively, Junbuqa son of Boyaohe of the Önggüt and Khochkhar Tegin, grandson of Barchuq Art-Tegin of the Uyghur. *Yuanshi* 109.2757–2760, 118.2924, and 122.3001; Song Lian 宋濂 et al., *Yuanshi* 元史 [Yuan History] (Beijing, 1976) (hereafter YS/Song Lian).

²⁴ RAD/Thackston, vol. I, p. 56. M. Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition in the Mongol Empire and the Ilkhanate of Iran* (Oxford, 2016), p. 98, describes this as a ‘mild punishment’, though I hate to think what a severe punishment would have entailed. Hope indicates that it was Möngke’s marriage to one of Tanggiz’s daughters that saved his life but Rashīd al-Dīn does not indicate that any such marriage took place. It was perhaps also Tanggiz’s Oirat family who protected him, as Möngke was married to Oghul Gaimish, a daughter of Qutuqa Beki.



Legend

- ∞ - Marriage
- C - Concubinage
- Italics* - Ilkhan
- Grey frame - Name appearing several times in the tree
- - Parent-child relationship
- - Concubinage or marriage relationship
- Öljetei (underlined) - Indicates woman
- * According to Rashīd al-Dīn, she was the daughter of Sülemish and Tödögech; according to Qāshānī, she was the full sister of Hājī Khatun, and thus daughter of Cheчек.
- **Qutlugh was the daughter of Tanggiz and his Ögedeid wife, but we do not know who the mother of Sülemish was.

Figure 1. Ilkhanid–Tanggizid family relations.
 Source: Tobias Jones.

Chinggisids.²⁵ Perhaps this daughter of Güyük was in fact more influential than Rashīd al-Dīn would have us believe.²⁶

One might think that would be that. Tanggiz's life had been spared, but his association with the cast-down house of Güyük would render him politically impotent. However, important princes of the Ögödeid and Chaghadaid houses were spared by the letter of the law and instead sent on dangerous campaigns, such as into Sòng territory with Möngke's brother Qubilai.²⁷ Tanggiz may have accompanied them, as in the next information we have about him, from a fifteenth-century Timurid source, he appears in Qubilai's retinue during the civil war with Ariq Böke.²⁸ The Qutuqa Bekid Oirats' involvement with the Toluids was to such an extent that they were across both sides of this civil war. Törelchi and Checheyigen's daughter Elchiqmish was the chief wife of Ariq Böke, while their other daughter Orghina was the ruler of the Chaghadaid *ulus* and supported Ariq Böke. Their son Buqa Temür's son Chupan was married to Ariq Böke's daughter Nomoghan. Other sons and daughters were supporters of, or married into, the lines of Qubilai and Hülegü.²⁹ Tanggiz apparently redeemed himself on the battlefield, if Ḥāfiẓ Abrū is to be believed, by helping to defeat the supporters of Ariq Böke and apprehending the Chinggisid prince himself.³⁰ The internecine struggles of the Toluids were reflected in the Oirats also, as Buqa Temür was a key commander of the right wing of Hülegü's army in the west while, as we have seen above, his son Chupan was a *küregen* to Ariq Böke.³¹ At least in this regard, father and son were separated by thousands of miles and did not have to face each other in direct combat.³²

It is unclear when or why Tanggiz would have departed Qubilai's service for Iran, but the date must have been after 1264 if Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's information about Tanggiz's capture of Ariq Böke is correct. Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's reliability as a source on this period of Mongol history is up for debate, given that he wrote some 150 years after the events. Charles Melville has argued in support of Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's work being taken seriously, given that he made use of Ilkhanid sources such as Rashīd al-Dīn, Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī, and the *Tārīkh-nāma-yi Herāt*.³³ However, his main source for thirteenth-century events, Rashīd al-Dīn, makes no mention of Tanggiz in Qubilai's service.³⁴ Chinese sources also do not seem to mention

²⁵ RAD/Thackston, vol. II, p. 409.

²⁶ Persian sources often portray Mongol women as intercessors for transgressors. Öljei Khatun, the wife of Hülegü, intervened on behalf of Ābīsh Khatun, the Salghurid Atabeg, with Arghun, Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, pp. 219–220; Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, pp. 128–129. She also intervened on behalf of Shams al-Dīn Juvainī with Abaqa, RAD/Thackston, vol. III, p. 543. Even concubines are recorded as doing so, with Boraqchin Egechi, concubine of Hülegü, protecting her grandson Baidu after he insulted the khan at the time, Gaykhatu, RAD/Thackston, vol. III, p. 583.

²⁷ Juvainī/Boyle, vol. II, pp. 591–592.

²⁸ Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Zubdat al-Tawārikh*, (ed.) S. K. Haj Sayyed Javadi (Tehran, 1395/2016), p. 52; see Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, p. 98.

²⁹ RAD/Thackston, vol. I, p. 56. Landa, 'Imperial sons-in-law', pp. 185–186, shows that, in the Chinese sources, the major member of this line mentioned is Beqlemish, who served Qubilai under the general Bayan against the Song and against the rebellious Toluid prince Shiregi. See also Broadbridge, *Women*, chapter 8; and Broadbridge, 'Marriage, family, politics', *passim*.

³⁰ Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, *Chronique des Rois Mongols en Iran*, (ed. and trans.) K. Bayani (Tehran, 1316/1938), Persian text p. 148, French translation pp. 114–115 (hereafter HA/Bayani); Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, p. 108.

³¹ Juvainī/Boyle, vol. II, pp. 608, 618.

³² This father–son dilemma mirrors the problem that Hülegü himself had, with his own son Jumghur a supporter of Ariq Böke, RAD/Thackston, vol. II, p. 428. The family dynamics continue to perplex, as Jumghur's own chief wife was Tolun Khatun, daughter of Buqa Temür, RAD/Thackston, vol. I, p. 57.

³³ C. Melville, 'Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī's *Zafarnāmah* and the historiography of the late Ilkhanid period', in *Iran and Iranian Studies: Essays in Honor of Iraj Afshar*, (ed.) K. Eslami (Princeton, NJ, 1998), pp. 1–12.

³⁴ M. E. Subtelny and C. Melville, 'Ḥāfeẓ-e Abrū', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online, <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hafez-e-abru> (accessed 10 January 2023).

him—an oddity if he was personally responsible for taking Ariq Böke to hand.³⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn also reports that Ariq Böke had many Oirats on his side, though this does not preclude Tanggiz from supporting Qubilai, as shown above.³⁶

We must also consider the context in which Ḥāfiẓ Abrū mentions this incident. It emerges in the section in which the author describes the animosity of Tanggiz's descendant 'Alī Pādshāh towards Arpa Khan (Ke'ün), descended from Ariq Böke, who was briefly ruler of the Ilkhanate in 1336. This animosity is portrayed as generations old due to Tanggiz's actions towards Ariq Böke. This may have been an attempt by Ḥāfiẓ Abrū to explain or enliven the conflict between the two for power. We might also question why, if Qubilai was so thrilled by Tanggiz's service to him, his reward was to send him away to Iran. The timing is also difficult to reconcile, given that Ariq Böke was apparently uncaptured in Almaliq in spring 1264, then had to go or be brought by Tanggiz to Qubilai's court to submit, then Tanggiz had to have turned back west to Iran before Hülegü's death in early 1265.³⁷ It seems much more likely that Tanggiz simply accompanied his relative Buqa Temür and his in-law Hülegü when they first were sent to Iran in the early 1250s.³⁸ Indeed, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's source for this conflict, Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī's *Zayl-i Zafarnāma*, does not mention anything about Tanggiz and Ariq Böke.³⁹ Therefore, this information is unique to Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, unattested to the Ilkhanid period itself.

If we choose to accept Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's information about Tanggiz's capturing Ariq Böke in 1264, nonetheless Tanggiz's relationship with Hülegü's family must have predated this. Hülegü's eighth son Ajai was born of a concubine named Arighan Egechi, a daughter of Tanggiz Küregen in the *ordu* of Qutui Khatun, the Qonggirat chief wife of Hülegü. Ajai came to Iran with Hülegü in the 1250s and was put in charge of Qutui's *ordu* there.⁴⁰ Tanggiz himself at some point married Tödögech, Hülegü's daughter by an unnamed concubine. This is perhaps where we can begin to perceive the 'junior' nature of Tanggiz's relationship with the Hülegüids, as Hülegü's daughter Menggügen, whose mother was a full wife, the Oirat Öljei Khatun, married Jaqir Küregen, the son of Buqa Temür.⁴¹

Tanggiz is rarely mentioned in the history of the Ilkhanate. He appears twelfth in the list of Hülegü's amirs in Rashīd al-Dīn's genealogical work *Shu 'ab-i Panjgāna*, which states that he was a 'respected commander of the Oirat and also became a *küregen*' (*az ūyrāt amīr-i mu 'tabar būd va kūrakān nīz shuda*).⁴² He must have been an intimate friend of the Ilkhan Abaqā (r. 1265–1282) as, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, when the amirs took counsel together to discuss the overthrow of the Ilkhan Aḥmad Tegüder (r. 1281–1284), they disagreed as to which Hülegüid prince to choose to replace him and they asked Tanggiz

³⁵ YS/Song Lian 5.98: 庚子，阿里不哥自昔木土之敗，不復能軍，至是與諸王玉龍答失、阿速帶、昔里給，其所謀臣不魯花、忽察、禿滿、阿里察、脫忽思等來歸。詔諸王皆太祖之裔，並釋不問，其謀臣不魯花皆伏誅。

Here, Ariq Böke, unable to continue fighting after defeat at the battle of Shimultu Naur, surrendered along with his fellow princes and officials. The Chinggisids were spared and the official Buluhua was executed. As we have seen, Chinese sources do mention other members of the Qutuqa Beki lineage, such as Beqlemish and Tumandar, as well as Inalchi's wife Qului (Huolei in Chinese sources) in Yanan, Landa, 'Imperial sons-in-law', p. 185.

³⁶ RAD/Thackston, vol. II, p. 430.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 431–432, 514. 19th Rabi' II 663.

³⁸ This would explain his high position on the list of Hülegü's amirs in the *Shu 'ab-i Panjgāna*; see below.

³⁹ Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī, *Zayl-i Zafarnāma*, (trans.) R. Sigeo, unpublished, pp. 13–15.

⁴⁰ RAD/Thackston, vol. II, pp. 472, 474; Broadbridge, 'Marriage, family, politics', p. 126.

⁴¹ RAD/Thackston, vol. II, p. 476. Jaqir Küregen was thus marrying his paternal cousin, as his father Buqa Temür was the brother of Hülegü's wife Öljei.

⁴² SP/Istanbul, folio 139b.

what Abaqa's will had been. Tanggiz reported that he and another amir, Shiktur Noyan, had heard Abaqa say that first the rule was to go to Möngke Temür, Hülegü's eleventh son born of Öljei Khatun, and then to Arghun, Abaqa's eldest son by a concubine, Qultaq Egechi.⁴³ This story is repeated in the *Akhbār-i Mughulān*, which indicates that Tanggiz's attestation of Abaqa's choosing Arghun was crucial, since the *yasa* was unclear about the status of a ruler's will.⁴⁴ Möngke Temür, the son of the Oirat Öljei Khatun, daughter of Törelchi (but not Checheyigen), was already dead and Arghun was married to Tanggiz's daughter Qutluğ, so it is unlikely that Tanggiz did not have some self-interest in promoting Arghun's cause.⁴⁵

This is the last we hear of Tanggiz himself. He had a remarkable career, being intimately connected with several Chinggisid rulers and princes, Güyük, Hülegü, Abaqa and Arghun, and perhaps even Qubilai. We have little information as to his comings and goings or the campaigns he took part in, while his overall influence in the Ilkhanate appears rather negligible. Nonetheless, he managed to bounce back from being associated with the hapless rule of Güyük to become a key cog in the family dynamic of the Toluid Ilkhanid state. Tanggiz was spared when many other Ögödeid officials were executed. His familial connections seem to have been key to both his survival and his restitution to some degree of political influence. It has been well noted elsewhere how other descendants of Qutuqa Beki and Checheyigen were key supports of the Toluid enterprise and brought a significant number of Oirat troops to bear in the western campaign.⁴⁶ Beyond the lineage of Qutuqa Beki and his daughter-in-law Checheyigen, the power and respect afforded to another Oirat, Arghun Aqa, were so prominent that, even though there were suspicions of his low birth, two of his sons, Nawrūz and Lagzi, married Chinggisid princesses.⁴⁷ While there is certainly no guarantee that Oirat family members or non-related Oirats would work together, a network did exist of Oirat *küregens* and their Chinggisid wives and mothers, and this can perhaps account for the protection that members of this network received despite some of their disloyal actions, as we shall see.

The career of Chechek Küregen

We have almost no information on Tanggiz's son Sülemish. The only concrete statements that we can make are that he was also married to Tödögech and had a daughter with her, Öljetei, who married the Ilkhan Arghun as a child, while Arghun never consummated the marriage due to her youth.⁴⁸ He also had a son, Chechek, who later married Tödögech and thus Sülemish must have had another wife or concubine, though she is not named.⁴⁹ Sülemish apparently had another son, Tuqa, whose daughter Malika Khatun married

⁴³ RAD/Thackston, vol. III, p. 558.

⁴⁴ G. Lane (trans.), *The Mongols in Iran: Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī's Akhbār-i Mughulān* (London and New York, 2018), Persian text p. 65, English translation p. 75, note 33; see also Jones, 'Mongol Loyalty Networks', pp. 151, 156.

⁴⁵ RAD/Thackston, vol. III, p. 561. However, he does not appear in the list of Arghun's 60+ amirs in SP/Istanbul, folios 149a and b.

⁴⁶ Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, pp. 98–99; Broadbridge, *Women*, chapter 9; Landa, 'Imperial sons-in-law', p. 164.

⁴⁷ RAD/Thackston, vol. II, p. 476 (Lagzi married to Baba (Mama according to Qāshāni and Banākati) seventh daughter of Hülegü, born of Öljei Khatun). RAD/Thackston, vol. III, p. 516 (Nawrūz married to Toghanchuq, fourth daughter of Abaqa, born of Kawkabi Khatun). For a discussion on Arghun Aqa's potential low birth, see S. Kamola, 'Rashīd al-Dīn and the Making of History in Mongol Iran' (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 2013), p. 160; and Jones, 'Mongol Loyalty Networks', pp. 57–58.

⁴⁸ RAD/Thackston, vol. III, p. 561.

⁴⁹ Broadbridge, 'Marriage, family, politics', p. 131.

the last Ilkhan, Abū Saʿīd.⁵⁰ We have significantly more on Cheчек Küregen, whose family were to have a major role to play in the last years of the Ilkhanate.

Cheчек first appears in the sources during the somewhat calamitous final throes of Gaykhatu's reign. He is listed as one of Gaykhatu's amirs in the *Shu'ab-i Panjgāna* and in the fifteenth-century Timurid genealogy *Mu'izz al-Ansāb*, which states that he was a commander of 1,000.⁵¹ After Gaykhatu's drunken insult of and assault on another Chinggisid, Baidu, and Gaykhatu's general misrule, Baidu decided to claim the throne himself.⁵² Cheчек was among a group of amirs that included Lagzi Küregen, a son of Arghun Aqa, who went to Baghdad and were won over by Baidu.⁵³ According to Vaṣṣāf, Cheчек was made a deputy amir to Taghachar, Baidu's *amir al-amirān*, the chief amir of the realm. Other deputies included Lagzi, Qunchuqbal, and Tükel, all of whom were *küregen*, while Baidu had three further *küregen* supporters, namely Eljigidei Quschi, Doladai Idachi, and Taraqai Küregen, a relative of Cheчек.⁵⁴ Cheчек seems to have been an extremely faithful servant to Baidu, fighting in his advance guard against Ghazan, and, while Taghachar and others betrayed Baidu to join Ghazan, Cheчек and a handful of others stayed by Baidu until the bitter end, fleeing towards Georgia before they were captured by Nawrūz's advance guard.⁵⁵

At this point, we come to a discrepancy between the stories of two of the Ilkhanid sources: Rashīd al-Dīn and Vaṣṣāf. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, once Ghazan had defeated Baidu, his amirs were dealt with. Certain amirs were made an example of, such as Eljigidei Quschi Küregen, who was executed without trial.⁵⁶ The others were given a trial that resulted in differing punishments. Qunchuqbal Küregen, who had been personally involved in the death of another *küregen*, Aq Buqa, who had loyally served Gaykhatu, was put to death on the insistence of Aq Buqa's son-in-law Hājji, the brother of Nawrūz. Meanwhile, two of the other *küregen*, Doladai and Cheчек, received beatings and were sent to the frontier province of Khurasan to absolve their crimes on the battlefield.⁵⁷ Vaṣṣāf, however, states that Cheчек was executed with the group of amirs who had been complicit in the killing of Gaykhatu.⁵⁸ This is somewhat bizarre, as Rashīd al-Dīn, Vaṣṣāf, and Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī confirm that Cheчек took part in Ghazan's 1299 campaign against the Mamluks. Vaṣṣāf lists him as one of the commanders of 10,000 and 1,000 who joined this campaign, later saying that Cheчек was put in charge of attacking Damascus with a great army.⁵⁹

⁵⁰ MA/Paris, folio 78a. Tuqa's mother is unclear.

⁵¹ SP/Istanbul, folio 145a lists him as Chihāk (چحاک) Küregen, one of the amirs who betrayed Gaykhatu and went over to Baidu; MA/Paris folio 69a, in Gaykhatu's genealogy, Cheчек appears as ححک Küregen of the Oirat. MA/Paris 75b, in Ghazan's genealogy, a Šijān (صجان) grandson of سکنر Küregen of the Oirat appears, stating that he was an amir of 1,000, *amir-i hizār*, under Gaykhatu, and that Ghazan appointed him to the same role. The spelling of both Tanggiz's and Cheчек's names is very inconsistent in Ilkhanid sources.

⁵² Shihāb al-Dīn 'Abd-Allāh Vaṣṣāf Shirāzi, *Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, (ed.) Muhammad Iqbal (Lahore, 1929), p. 276 (hereafter Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal); 'Abd Allāh b. Fazl Allāh Vaṣṣāf-i Ḥazrat, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, (ed.) Abd al-Muhammad Ayati (Tehran, 1346/1967–1968), p. 168 (hereafter Vaṣṣāf/Ayati).

⁵³ RAD/Thackston, vol. III, p. 585.

⁵⁴ Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 284; Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 172; RAD/Thackston, vol. I, p. 57, vol. II, pp. 474–476, 516, vol. III, pp. 562, 622, 629; Landa, 'Tūraqai Güregen', p. 1195.

⁵⁵ RAD/Thackston, vol. III, pp. 614, 626.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 629. According to Vaṣṣāf, this was also the fate of Tükel, Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 325; Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 198.

⁵⁷ RAD/Thackston, vol. III, p. 629. No mention is made of any punishment for Lagzi Küregen in either Rashīd al-Dīn or Vaṣṣāf, although he was not executed until Ghazan's conflict with Nawrūz in April 1297, RAD/Thackston, vol. III, p. 637; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 341; Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 206.

⁵⁸ Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 325; Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 198. Vaṣṣāf does state that Doladai was sent to Khurasan with a trustworthy army.

⁵⁹ Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, pp. 374, 380; Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, pp. 223, 228, *ججاک را با لشکری تمام به ضبط دمشق*, *jijāk rā bā lashkarī tamām bi zabṭ-i damashq*. Mustawfī/Ward, folios 699a and 699b, English text pp. 500, 503.

Rashid al-Dīn provides us with one more interesting titbit about him. He reports that, in 1296, during the revolt of the Chinggisid Söge s. Yoshmut s. Hülegü, news arrived that Nawrūz had killed Söge and Nurin Aqa, the governor of Khurasan who had been put in charge of Chechek and Doladai, had seized them and that all was well.⁶⁰ There is no indication that Chechek actually took part in Söge's revolt and there seems to have been no further punishment for him in this instance, as he continued to serve in the Ilkhanid military in Syria some years later.⁶¹ Neither did a regime change greatly affect Chechek. He is listed as one of Öljeitü's amirs in the *Mu'izz al-Ansāb* and two of Öljeitü's wives, Hājji Khatun and Öljetei Khatun, were relatives of Chechek.⁶² According to Hamdallāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī and, following him, Hāfiz Abrū, Chechek was one of the amirs of the left wing during Öljeitü's campaign in Gilan, where he is called 'the *bahādur* of Iraq', accompanying Irenjin. Meanwhile, Chechek's son 'Alī Pādshāh joined the right wing with Amir Sevinch.⁶³

The use of the title *bahādur*, or rather *ba'atur* in Mongolian, instead of his normal *küregen* is interesting, however. While the word could mean 'brave one, or hero', it was also the term used specifically for the forces in the vanguard of Mongol troops who were sent to pay for their crimes.⁶⁴ Péng Dà yǎ, a Sòng envoy who visited the Mongols in 1233, says that 'if the transgressor is not killed, then he is punished with service in the *ba'atur* army (similar to the suicide warriors of the Han people), and only after he has survived three or four times is he absolved'.⁶⁵ Chechek may well have still been serving his sentence during Öljeitü's reign.

At this stage, it is worth comparing Chechek Küregen's situation with that of other 'rebellious' *küregen* in the Mongol empire. Arguably the most famous instance of such a rebellion was the support of the Uyghur *idiqu* (ruler) Salindi for the Ögödeids during the Jochid–Toluid coup.⁶⁶ Salindi had married Chinggis's daughter Alajin Beki.⁶⁷ Unlike Tanggiz himself, Salindi was not spared and, after torture, was executed by his brother Ögrünch at Besh-Baligh.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, the Uyghur royal family was kept in power and continued to marry Chinggisid princesses. Qubilai renewed this alliance, marrying the *idiqu* Qochkar Tegin, the grandson of Barchuq Art-Tegin, to a daughter of Güyük, Babahaer. This was as a reward for Qochkar's stalwart defence of the city of Qara-Qocho against the Chaghadaids Dua and his brother Buzma. Apparently, Qochkar had only been able to convince Dua to give up the siege with his own marriage alliance, marrying his daughter Eliqmish Beki to Dua.⁶⁹

⁶⁰ RAD/Thackston, vol. III, p. 631.

⁶¹ Chechek is barely mentioned in secondary sources dealing with the Oirats in the Ilkhanate, usually only in regard to his relationship with 'Alī Pādshāh and his sister Hājji, with only Landa mentioning in a footnote that he had supported Baidu, Landa, 'Imperial sons-in-law', p. 184, note 116.

⁶² MA/Paris, folio 77b. Either both daughters or Öljetei was a sister of Chechek.

⁶³ Mustawfī/Ward, vol. I, folio 716a (کورکن حاک), English translation vol. III, p. 578, which Ward transliterates as Gurkhan Jaijak. Mustawfī is not clear that it is 'Alī Pādshāh on the right wing, saying that only *Mīr 'Alī*, more likely 'Alī Qushchī. HA/Bayani, Persian text p. 14, French translation p. 13, specifies 'Alī Pādshāh. Neither Chechek nor 'Alī Pādshāh is mentioned as taking part by Qāshānī.

⁶⁴ C. P. Atwood (trans.), *The Secret History of the Mongols* (London, 2023), Introduction, p. lxxxix; C. P. Atwood, 'Early inner Asian terms related to the imperial family and the Comitatus', *Central Asiatic Journal* 56 (2013/2013), p. 55.

⁶⁵ Peng Daya, *A Sketch of the Black Tatars—By Peng Daya and Xu Ting of the Southern Song*, in *The Rise of the Mongols: Five Chinese Sources*, (ed. and trans.) C. P. Atwood (Cambridge, 2021), p. 114.

⁶⁶ For the complexities of historiography on this issue, see Broadbridge, *Women*, pp. 119–120; C. P. Atwood, 'The Uyghur Stone: archaeological revelations on the Mongol empire', in *The Steppe Lands and the World Beyond Them*, (eds.) F. Curta and B. P. Maleon (Iași, 2013), pp. 331–332.

⁶⁷ Juvaini/Boyle, vol. I, pp. 47–48; Atwood 'Uyghur Stone', p. 331.

⁶⁸ Juvaini/Boyle, vol. I, pp. 51–52.

⁶⁹ T. Allsen, 'The Yüan Dynasty and the Uighurs of Turfan in the 13th century', in *China Among Equals*, (ed.) M. Rossabi (Berkeley, CA, 1983), p. 254; L. Hambis, *Le chapitre CVIII du Yuan Che: Les fiefs attribués aux membres de la*

Later descendants of the line were given the title ‘Prince of Gāochāng’ and continued to marry Chinggisid princesses.⁷⁰

Another less well-known situation has been elaborated on by Christopher Atwood with the character of Dergei Küregen/Dergei Amal of the Qonggirat.⁷¹ Despite the historiographical complexities of this case, Atwood has shown that Chinggis sought a marriage between Dergei, the leader of the Qonggirat, and his daughter Tümelün—with attendant Qonggirat submission. Dergei, however, rejected and insulted Tümelün, for which Chinggis had him killed and replaced him with the leader of the Bosqur Qonggirats, Alchi Noyan.⁷² Dergei’s son Chikü, however, was not killed and was regularly part of Mongol campaigns against the Jīn, being noted for his particular bravery, such as in the capture of Dexingfu. For his proof of loyalty and stellar service to the Mongol cause, he was granted the son-in-law position that his father had spurned, marrying Tümelün, and his descendants continued to intermarry with the Chinggisid line in the Yuán realm.⁷³

Thus, the Mongols had a history of rehabilitating *küregen* relationships, even if members of the lineage in question did not always live up to Mongol standards of their subjects. Military performance was used as both a carrot and a stick: success in dangerous circumstances proved one’s worth. In the situations mentioned above, the *küregen* who failed in service was killed and relatives promoted. Interestingly, in Chechek’s situation, he was not killed, but ordered to expiate his guilt on the fields of battle: in Khurasan, in Syria, and in Gilan. In a reverse of the above cases, it was rather his sons who suffered originally. After three generations of marriage to a Chinggisid princess, Tödögech, none of Chechek’s sons were made *küregens* during the reigns of Ghazan and Öljeitü, though his daughter Hājji and his sister/daughter Öljetei both married Öljeitü. Abū Sa‘īd eventually did make his uncle Muḥammad Beg, the younger brother of ‘Alī Pādshāh, a *küregen* in 1319, after the rebellion and death of the amir Qurumshi Küregen.⁷⁴

The other likely reason for the maintenance of Chechek Küregen and his family was the departure of Taraqai Küregen and his *tümen* for Mamluk lands after the defeat of Baidu.⁷⁵ We can perhaps see this as a ‘promotion’ of the more junior Qutuqa Bekid *küregen* lineage. This promotion of junior lineage to senior position occurred among the wives of Chinggisids. Hüleü had married Güyük Khatun, the daughter of Chinggis’s daughter Checheyigen and Törelchi Küregen; after her death and that of Qutui Khatun, Hüleü’s Qonggirat wife, Güyük’s half-sister (thus not born of Checheyigen) Öljei was raised in her place.⁷⁶ This promotion also took place among the *küregen*, as the above

famille impériale et aux ministres de la cour Mongole d’après l’histoire Chinoise officielle de la dynastie Mongole (Leiden, 1954), Table 11 and note 10, pp. 133–134.

⁷⁰ M. Brose, ‘The Mongols in the eyes of the Uyghurs’, in *The Mongol World*, (eds.) M. Hope and T. May (London and New York, 2022), p. 793; Hambis, *Chapitre CVIII*, Table 11: Ne’üril Tegin Fümā 駙馬 (prince consort), son of Qochkar, married two granddaughters of Ögödei, Buluqan and Babuča, as well as a daughter of Ananda, Ulajin, while his son Temür Buqa married Dorji-sman, daughter of Köten.

⁷¹ Atwood, ‘Chikü Küregen’, *passim*.

⁷² RAD/Thackston, vol. I, p. 85. For the Bosqur Qonggirat, see İ. Togan, ‘The Qongrat in history’, in *History and Historiography of Post Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East*, (eds.) J. Pfeiffer and Sh. A. Quinn (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp. 69–72.

⁷³ Atwood, ‘Chikü Küregen’, p. 21. Atwood suggests that, given the information we have about Alchi as the husband of Tümelün and as the ‘father’ of Chikü, he adopted Chikü and, when Chikü had proven himself, the marriage with Tümelün could be confirmed.

⁷⁴ Melville, ‘Fall of Amir Chupan’, p. 56.

⁷⁵ J. van den Bent, ‘Mongols in Mamluk Eyes: Representing Ethnic Others in the Medieval Middle East’ (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 2020), pp. 220–221, suggests this was either 10,000 or 18,000, depending on the Mamluk historian.

⁷⁶ RAD/Thackston, vol. II, p. 472; Broadbridge, *Women*, pp. 265–267.

example of Dergei Amal's replacement by Alchi Noyan showed. Cheчек and his sons, while not held in particularly high honour under Ghazan and Öljeitü as Cheчек fought to absolve his crimes, benefitted from the departure of Taraqai and remained the Qutuqa Bekid figureheads for the remaining Oirat troops in the Ilkhanate.

We have a remarkable career here. Cheчек was a firm adherent of Baidu after betraying Gaykhatu and yet survived to be a commander in Ghazan and Öljeitü's military. This is eerily reminiscent of his grandfather's career—supporting a failed khan, given a physical punishment, but then reintegrated into the family of the ruling house. One wonders whether it was Cheчек's wife Tödögech who pleaded for his life, just as Güyük's daughter had done for Tanggiz. We hear from Vaṣṣāf that, some 20 years after these events, 'Alī Pādshāh, Cheчек's son, was sent along with Abū Sa'īd by Öljeitü to Khurasan, serving as a *khizānachi* (treasurer) to the prince.⁷⁷ Hājji Khatun, Abū Sa'īd's mother and Cheчек's daughter, also accompanied her son to Khurasan.⁷⁸ Clearly, Cheчек's family seem not to have suffered greatly from either his support of Baidu or any suspicion on him of participating in Söge's revolt, given that they married back into the Hülegüid family. His status as a criminal expiating his crimes and also the grandfather of Abū Sa'īd leads to a confusing picture of this character in the Ilkhanid sources, in a similar manner to that of his grandfather Tanggiz.

Cheчек underwent an interesting historiographical journey in his later career. The two main sources for Öljeitü's reign, Qāshāni and Mustawfi, deal with him quite differently. In Qāshāni's narrative, Cheчек only appears once, listed as the father of Hājji Khatun.⁷⁹ Mustawfi's *Zafarnāma*, however, mentions him regularly. He is shown as taking part in the ill-fated Gilan campaign of 1307 but does not appear in Qāshāni's version of the event.⁸⁰ In Timurid historiography, largely reliant on Mustawfi's version of events, Cheчек appears as an amir of Öljeitü's, though Qāshāni does not state this, despite listing 25 of Öljeitü's amirs.⁸¹ Both Mustawfi and Qāshāni agree, however, that there was a *jarghu* (trial) investigating the Gilaki wars in which amirs were killed, suffered corporal punishment, or were dismissed from their roles.⁸² While Cheчек is not listed in this group, this campaign is the last information that we have on him. If he was implicated, it may explain why Qāshāni, whose work was finished during Abū Sa'īd's reign, may have glossed over Cheчек's involvement, given that he was the grandfather of the sitting ruler and father of the 'queen-mother' Hājji. Such historiographical whitewashing would be nothing new among the *küregen* dynasties, as shown by Christopher Atwood in the cases of those such as the Öng'üt and the Qonggirat.⁸³

The zenith of Tanggizid power: 'Alī Pādshāh, Muḥammad Beg, and Hājji Khatun

It was in the last years of the Ilkhanate that the Tanggizid line truly became a decisive political force, again despite their potentially treasonous behaviour. The actions of 'Alī Pādshāh and Muḥammad Beg, the sons of Cheчек, have been considered by Charles Melville; however, they must be reconsidered in light of their family's actions that were contrary to the Ilkhanid rulers.⁸⁴ Neither brother seems to have held particularly

⁷⁷ Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 614; Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, pp. 353–354. Qāshāni/Hambali, p. 179 states that every amir and vizier had to send a son or relative along with Abū Sa'īd.

⁷⁸ Banākatī, p. 478.

⁷⁹ Qāshāni/Hambali, p. 8.

⁸⁰ Mustawfi/Ward, vol. I, folio 716a, vol. III (English translation), p. 578; Qāshāni/Hambali, pp. 66–69.

⁸¹ MA/Paris, folio 77b; HA/Bayani, Persian text p. 14, French translation p. 13; Qāshāni/Hambali, pp. 9–10.

⁸² Mustawfi/Ward, vol. I, folios 717b and 718a, vol. III, pp. 586–587; Qāshāni/Hambali, p. 72.

⁸³ C. P. Atwood, 'Historiography and transformation of ethnic identity in the Mongol empire: the Öng'üt case', *Asian Ethnicity*, 15.4 (2014), pp. 514–534; and 'Chikü Küregen', *passim*.

⁸⁴ Melville, 'Fall of Amir Chupan', *passim*, particularly pp. 30–33.

high rank in Öljeitü's reign or in Abū Sa'īd's early rule.⁸⁵ They were supporters of Abū Sa'īd, along with the great Amir Chupan and his sons, during the revolt of the amirs in 1319.⁸⁶ This does not seem to have led to any significant political or military position given the power of the Chupanids, although one of them, Muḥammad Beg, achieved *küregen* status at this time. It was only after the fall of the Chupanids that they achieved notoriety. 'Alī Pādshāh assisted Abū Sa'īd in doing away with Chupan's son Dimashq Khwāja in 1327, while Muḥammad Beg, originally a supporter of Chupan, deserted him along with some other amirs and 30,000 men, ending Chupan's rebellion.⁸⁷ While this late withdrawal originally led to Muḥammad Beg's being stripped of his status as amir, he was quickly forgiven and restored to rank.⁸⁸ Both brothers were eventually appointed to governorships—Muḥammad Beg in Anatolia and 'Alī Pādshāh in Baghdad.⁸⁹ Given this status, and the fact that Abū Sa'īd's mother Ḥājji Khatun was their sister, while one of his wives was their cousin Malika, the Tanggizids had finally established themselves as one of the most powerful families in the Ilkhanate.

However, this does not seem to have been enough for this ambitious family. Not long after Chupan's fall, the brothers were implicated in the revolt of Narin Taghai, the governor of Khurasan. They had been sent to Khurasan, refused to go, and turned back to the royal camp.⁹⁰ While they never in fact drew arms against their nephew, this certainly could have been, and was seen as, a threat to the Ilkhan himself. Yet again, this family was saved by their female relatives, as Ḥājji Khatun intervened with her son and simply had 'Alī Pādshāh sent to his own *yurt* near Baghdad, while Muḥammad Beg was sent to Khurasan.⁹¹ It does not seem that 'Alī Pādshāh was even relieved of his position, though al-Aharī confirms that Muḥammad Beg was dismissed as governor of Rum.⁹²

What is incredible is the language used to excuse the brothers' actions. Ḥāfiẓ Abrū claims that Abū Sa'īd let 'Alī Pādshāh off the hook because he was 'still a child, *hanūz kūdak ast*', even shifting the blame onto his mother Ḥājji, saying that, when he gave 'Alī Pādshāh his *tümen*, he in fact expected Ḥājji to run it.⁹³ Again, this seems to be a story-telling device of Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, as he himself reports on 'Alī Pādshāh's campaigns in Gilan when Abū Sa'īd was only a one-year-old. Calling into question 'Alī Pādshāh's suitability for command based on age would only negatively affect Abū Sa'īd, who was significantly younger than his uncle. Muḥammad Beg was similarly excused, saying that he was 'simple-minded, *sāda-nafs*'.⁹⁴ Blame was laid on other amirs such as Tasstemür who

⁸⁵ MA/Paris, folio 79b lists 'Alī Pāshā, Muḥammad Cheчек, and an unnamed brother of 'Alī Pāshā (most likely Ḥāfiẓ) very low down in the list of the amirs of Abū Sa'īd.

⁸⁶ HA/Bayani, Persian text p. 100, French translation p. 77.

⁸⁷ Ahari/van Loon, Persian text p. 153, English translation p. 55; HA/Bayani, Persian text p. 130, French translation p. 103.

⁸⁸ Mustawfi/Ward, vol. I folio 734b, vol. III, p. 663.

⁸⁹ Ahari/van Loon, Persian text p. 155, English translation p. 57; Muḥammad bin 'Alī bin Muḥammad Shabānkāra'i, *Majmu' al-Ansāb*, (ed.) Mir Hashem Mohdas (Tehran, 1363/1985), p. 290, specifies that 'Alī Pādshāh had control of Baghdad, Mosul, Diyarbakir, and all of Iraq-i Arab.

⁹⁰ Mustawfi/Ward, vol. I, folios 735b and 736a, vol. III, pp. 667–668.

⁹¹ Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jam'i al-Tavārikh*, MS Supplément Persan 209, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, folios 521–523 (hereafter HA/Paris).

⁹² Ahari/van Loon, Persian text p. 156, English translation p. 57; Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta, A.D. 1325–1354*, (trans.) H. A. R. Gibb (Cambridge, 1958), vol. II, p. 289, and the Mamluk sources, such as al-Ṣafadi, indicate that Diyarbakir was under the control of the Mongol Amir Sutai until he died in 1331–1332, and only then did it pass to 'Alī Pādshāh. It was apparently for this reason that Ḥājji Taghai, Sutai's son, opposed 'Alī Pādshāh after his defeat of Arpa Ke'ün; see P. Wing, *The Jalayirids: Dynastic State Formation in the Mongol Middle East* (Edinburgh, 2016), p. 78.

⁹³ HA/Paris, folio 523.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*; Melville, 'Fall of Amir Chupan', p. 32.

were supposedly older and wiser, and they were tried in the *jarghu*. Both Tashtemür and Narin Taghai were executed in 1329.⁹⁵ These justifications are not mentioned in Mustawfī's account of the rebellion and perhaps stem from Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's seeking to understand why Abū Sa'īd did not inflict any serious punishment on his uncles.

The final word on Abū Sa'īd's reign from Mustawfī's *Zafarnāma* deals with the situation in Fars. Abū Sa'īd had replaced the governor of Shiraz, Muḥammadshāh s. Esen Qutlugh, with one of his personal companions (*inaq*), Musāfir. Muḥammadshāh appealed to the amirs, questioning Musāfir's lofty position and among them they agreed to bring down Abū Sa'īd's protégé. One of the amirs involved was again Muḥammad Beg. This group of amirs besieged Abū Sa'īd's *ordu*, demanding that Musāfir be sent out. They were dispersed by various amirs of the Ilkhan and fled, but were captured on the road. Again, Abū Sa'īd, under the advisement of his vizier Ghīyās al-Dīn s. Rashīd al-Dīn, declined to kill them but had them imprisoned in separate fortresses.⁹⁶ Lenience, however, did nothing to improve relations between Abū Sa'īd and his uncle.

ʿAlī Pādshāh and Muḥammad Beg would continue to be key players after Abū Sa'īd's death, as is well documented. As leader of the Oirats based in the region of Diyarbakir, ʿAlī Pādshāh in 1336 did away with the short-lived reign of Arpa Ke'ün, the descendant of Ariq Böke, and executed the vizier Ghīyās al-Dīn Muḥammad and installed his own puppet khan, Mūsa, a descendant of Baidu.⁹⁷ In the rapidly developing situation after Abū Sa'īd's death, ʿAlī Pādshāh was himself killed by Shaykh Ḥasan Jalayir, another member of a powerful *küregen* family, the son of Amir Ḥusayn Küregen and Öljetei Khatun, the sister of Öljeitü.⁹⁸ Shaykh Ḥasan had his own Chinggisid puppet, Muḥammad Khan. After Mūsa Khan was killed, Muḥammad Beg and his wife Qutlugh Mulk were killed by Kurds in 1337.⁹⁹

The brothers' prestige had certainly grown by this point, as shown by Shaykh Ḥasan Jalayir's actions towards the two, rivals though they may have been. Shabānkāra'ī reports that, leading up to the battle between Shaykh Ḥasan and ʿAlī Pādshāh, Shaykh Ḥasan sent messages trying to organise a *quriltai* with all the *aqā-īni* and khatuns present at which they could choose a suitable descendant of Tolui and Hülegü to rule. In this letter, he states that 'ʿAlī Pāshā is the *aqā*, *ʿalī pāshā āqāst*'.¹⁰⁰ This term, when applied as a title to an amir, such as Chupan or Arghun, was one of respect but, used in this definite manner, it conveys the meaning that ʿAlī Pādshāh was the eldest member of the ruling house and had the authority to call the *quriltai*.¹⁰¹ We are also informed by al-Aharī that Shaykh Ḥasan quickly sought to establish a familial connection with the Tanggizid line once the brothers were out of the way by marrying the daughter of Muḥammad Beg, whereupon Shaykh Ḥasan's 'rank reached the highest degree and his fame spread throughout the world'.¹⁰² The prestige of marrying a descendant of a Chinggisid–*küregen* union was not

⁹⁵ Ḥamdullāh Mustawfī-i Qazwīnī, *The Ta'rikh-i Guzīda, or 'Select History', Compiled in A.H. 730 (A.D. 1330) and Now Abridged in English from a Manuscript Dated A.H. 857 (A.D. 1453)*, (trans. and ed.) E. G. Browne (Leiden, 1913), Persian text pp. 611–612, English abridged translation p. 151. Mustawfī here does not mention any involvement of ʿAlī Pādshāh, although, in his *Zafarnāma*, he does. al-Aharī also does not mention ʿAlī Pādshāh, while Shabānkāra'ī does not mention the incident at all.

⁹⁶ Mustawfī/Ward, vol. I, folios 736a and 736b, vol. III, pp. 670–671.

⁹⁷ Mustawfī, *Zayl*, pp. 14–19.

⁹⁸ Mustawfī, *Zayl*, *passim*, refers to him as Shaykh Ḥasan Öljetei, emphasising his connection with this Chinggisid princess.

⁹⁹ Aharī/van Loon, English translation p. 64, Persian text p. 163; Broadbridge, *Women*, pp. 289–295.

¹⁰⁰ Shabānkāra'ī, p. 303.

¹⁰¹ Jones, 'Mongol Loyalty Networks', pp. 117–123.

¹⁰² Aharī/van Loon, English translation p. 65, Persian text p. 164. However, van Loon seems to have mistranslated this section: 'چون آنجا رفت دختر محمد بیگ برادر علی پادشاه را که پادشاه زاده بود بخواست و مرتبه او بدرجه اعلا رسید و نام او در جهان منتشر شد *chūn ānjā raft dukhtar-i muḥammad bik barādar-i ʿalī bāshāh rā ki pādshāh-zāda būd bi-khvāst va*

lost on Shaykh Ḥasan and he was later able to gain the support of the Oirat troops who had served the Tanggizids, possibly because of this union.¹⁰³

Conclusion

This completes the remarkable family tale of the lineage of Tanggiz Küregen. While their line has been called ‘junior’ and their influence played down, their durability was incredible.¹⁰⁴ Despite their repeated mistaken political choices, they ended up as major players in the collapsing Ilkhanid world of the 1330s, with ‘Alī Pādshāh becoming ruler in all but name during the short reign of Mūsa Khan in 1336. One has to wonder why Hülegü and his descendants were so forgiving of this *küregen* lineage. While *küregen* status was some protection against royal retribution, Ghazan’s treatment of Baidu’s amirs in 1296 and Nawrūz and Lagzi later shows that this did not guarantee anything. We could perhaps argue that Tanggiz’s line was simply too intertwined with the Ilkhanids to be uprooted without causing damage to the Chinggisids themselves, although this is exactly what was done with the Chupanids. We may also consider the protection afforded them by their wives and mothers, as Güyük’s daughter spoke out for Tanggiz and Ḥājji Khatun protected her brothers. Again, however, this does not seem to have saved Qunchuqbal Küregen or Chupan Küregen.

How can one explain this great clemency on behalf of the Ilkhanid rulers? Firstly, we must again consider Landa’s analysis of the *küregen* as primarily a military class. Some *küregen* did not seem to have had troops attached to them by birth, like Qunchuqbal, so these could be more readily disposed of. It seems that the most logical explanation for the survival of Tanggiz’s line was that they were simply too valuable to the state to be executed. They could be punished outwardly but the Oirat military were a vital cog in the Ilkhanid military apparatus and their loyalty to their chosen lineage was too strong to simply place someone else in charge. Mustawfī, followed by Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, claims that Shaykh Ḥasan Chupanī in the 1340s executed 32 Oirat amirs, as he was worried about their negative influence in the realm, indicating the significant number of Oirats who may have been present in the Ilkhanate by the mid-fourteenth century.¹⁰⁵ Taraqai’s ability to simply move out with his 10,000 to 18,000 troops was as great a warning as any to the Ilkhanids of the risk of alienating these powerful Oirat lineages.

Another perhaps simplistic explanation, but one that cannot be ignored, is that the Mongols were simply following the edict of Chinggis Khan. According to Juvainī, after the speedy submission of the Oirats, ‘an edict (*qazā-yi ḥuqūq*) was issued concerning that tribe (*qabīla*) to the effect that the daughters of their emirs should be married to the descendants of Chinggis-Khan’.¹⁰⁶ This echoes the YS passage concerning the

martaba-yi ū bi-daraji-yi i lā rasīd va nām-i ū dar jahān muntashir shud. Van Loon sees the *pādshāh-zāda* as ‘Alī Pādshāh, calling him a ‘prince’. However, the term *pādshāh-zāda* is not gendered and, given that, on the previous page, al-Aḥarī notes that Muḥammad Beg was married to a Chinggisid princess, Qutluḡ Mulk, daughter of Gaykhatu, this *pādshāh-zāda* likely refers to the daughter of Muḥammad Beg. The Tanggizid line was only descended from the Chinggisids in the female line; only descent from a male Chinggisid would make one a prince/princess.

¹⁰³ Wing, *Jalayirids*, p. 88; I. Landa, ‘Oirats in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate in the thirteenth to the early fifteenth centuries: two cases of assimilation into the Muslim environment’, *Mamluk Studies Review* 19 (2016), p. 173, shows that ‘Alī Pādshāh’s son Ḥājji fled to the Mamluks and was given an amirate, which may have left the Oirats without a male leader of the Tanggizid lineage.

¹⁰⁴ A. Broadbridge, ‘Consort families in the successor khanates’, in *The Mongol World*, (eds.) Hope and May, p. 417.

¹⁰⁵ Mustawfī, *Zayl*, pp. 68–9; HA/Bayani, French translation p. 138, Persian text p. 168.

¹⁰⁶ Juvainī/Boyle, vol. II, p. 506; ‘Aṭā Malik Juvainī, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*, (ed.) Mohammad Qazvini (Tehran, 2011), vol. II, p. 242.

Qonggirat: ‘If the Qonggirad lineage gives birth to a daughter ... she shall be made an empress, and if they give birth to a son ... he shall be granted imperial princesses. ... it shall not be cut off from generation to generation.’¹⁰⁷ The Mongols had great respect for the *jasaq* and *yosun* of Chinggis Khan and, if this edict is not being invented by Juvainī, then they likely took these stipulations very seriously. We can see from other khانات that these Oirat intermarriages were commonplace.¹⁰⁸ In order to have daughters for their sons to marry, the Chinggisids had to protect the lives of the Oirat Qutuqa Bekid–Checheyigenid lineage at least. They did not hold the highest official positions in the realm for most of the Ilkhanid period; they were not being listed as governors or head amirs for example. However, they were always tied back into the family, no matter the status of the lineages themselves. Eventually, their protected status seems to have been solidified and none of them was ever put to death by the Ilkhans.

This protected status seems to have given the family ever-growing confidence to assert themselves with regard to the Ilkhans. This was seemingly tied to the rise of the *qarachu begs* (commoner lords) in this period and the increasing lack of control that the Ilkhans had over them.¹⁰⁹ While Ilkhans such as Arghun and Ghazan sought centralising measures to solidify their own power, such as executing Chinggisid princes who were seen as a threat, this in fact strengthened the position of the *küregen* class, whose prestige grew with the dwindling of the Hülegüid lineage. A notable instance of this occurs in Qāshānī’s account of an embassy from the Özbek Khan of the Jochids to Öljeitü in September 1315. The Jochid ambassador Aq Buqa was met at Tabriz not by Öljeitü himself, but by Amir Ḥusayn Küregen of the Jalayir. Amir Ḥusayn sought to offer a cup to Aq Buqa—a custom called *kāsa-gīrī* that was reserved for Chinggisid rulers themselves.¹¹⁰ Aq Buqa was incensed by this, pointing out that Amir Ḥusayn was still an *ötegü boghol* (member of the aristocratic elite) and that it was the custom of the *küregen* to remain two paces behind those of the *urugh* (Chinggisid lineage).¹¹¹ Aq Buqa accused Amir Ḥusayn of forgetting the *jasaq* and abandoning the *yosun*. Amir Ḥusayn answered contemptuously, saying that the envoy was here only as a messenger, not to enforce the *jasaq* on the line of Chinggis: ‘*amīr ḥusayn bi pāsukh mī-gūyad ki, “amīr aknūn bar sabīl-i risālat āmada ast, na bi yāsāmīshī-yi ustukhvān-i urūgh-i chingīz khān”*’.¹¹² This vitriolic attack and dismissive response speak to the high position that the *küregen* elites had achieved in the Ilkhanate—one that shocked the Jochid ambassador.

Powerful *küregen* amirs were involved in revolts against Gaykhatu, Ghazan, and Abū Sa‘īd. With the incredibly influential position that Chupan and his sons were put in by successive Ilkhans, once Abū Sa‘īd sought to challenge the Chupanids, he had little choice but to rely on ‘Alī Pādshāh and his significant Oirat military following. With the Chupanids temporarily down and out, the Tanggizids were able to act with impunity vis-à-vis Abū Sa‘īd, who could not risk losing this Oirat support. Thus, the actions of ‘Alī Pādshāh and Muḥammad Beg in the final years of the Ilkhanate contributed to the

¹⁰⁷ YS/Song Lian 10:118, translation from C. P. Atwood, ‘Ulus emirs, Keshig elders, signatures, and marriage partners: the evolution of a classic Mongol institution’, in *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries*, (ed.) D. Sneath (Cambridge, 2006), p. 161.

¹⁰⁸ Broadbridge, ‘Marriage, family, politics’, *passim*; Landa, ‘Imperial sons-in-law’, *passim*.

¹⁰⁹ Atwood, ‘Ulus emirs’, p. 146.

¹¹⁰ Jones, ‘Mongol Loyalty Networks’, pp. 62–67.

¹¹¹ While *ötegü boghol* literally means ‘hereditary slave’, it has been shown that this term was used for powerful aristocracies of the Mongol empire; see T. Skrynnikova, ‘*Boghol*, a category of submission at the Mongols’, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 58.3 (2005), pp. 313–319.

¹¹² Qāshānī/Hambali, p. 175. Amir Ḥusayn is apparently claiming membership of the *urugh* through marriage, as he was not the son of a Chinggisid wife. His father Aq Buqa married Öljetei, daughter of Arghun, but Amir Ḥusayn later married her, so he was not her son.

turbulent downfall of the Ilkhanid house. Ironically, it was perhaps a split in the Tanggizid family itself that caused the khanate to finally split apart. Shabānkāra'ī reports that Ḥājī Khatun supported Arpa Ke'ün, not her brothers.¹¹³ Had 'Alī Pādshāh brought his Oirat forces in support of Arpa and not encouraged the departure of the amir Akranj with his Uyghur *tümen* from Arpa, it is likely the Ilkhanate could have survived as a political entity.¹¹⁴ However, at this stage, it seems that 'Alī Pādshāh was no longer acting solely in an Ilkhanid milieu, as he seems to have had support from the Mamluk sultan al-Naṣir Muḥammad.¹¹⁵ In the end, it could be said that the Tanggizids, whom the Ilkhanid rulers tried so hard to keep onside, did as much as anyone to end the Ilkhanid state, paving the way for the domination of the former Ilkhanid lands by *küregen* families.

Acknowledgements. This work was developed with the support of the NWO project 'Turks, texts and territory: imperial ideology and cultural production in central Eurasia' at Leiden University, file number 277-69-001. My thanks to Geoff Humble for his help with the Chinese texts, to Michael Hope for his suggestions, and to my reviewers for their comments and advice. All remaining errors are my own.

Conflicts of interest. None.

¹¹³ Shabānkāra'ī, p. 294.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

¹¹⁵ Landa, 'Oirats', p. 170, following the Mamluk chronicler al-Shujā'ī.

Cite this article: Jones TX (2024). The curious case of the iniquitous in-laws: Oirat disloyalty in Mongol Iran. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 34, 837–854. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186324000129>