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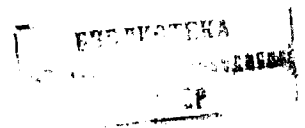
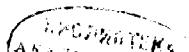
STUDI IN ONORE DI LUCIANO PETECH

a cura di  
PAOLO DAFFINÀ

STAMPATO CON IL CONTRIBUTO DEL CONS. NAZ. DELLE RICERCHE



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## THE EXPRESSION QAJARU INERÜ IN PARAGRAPH 70 OF THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS

Paragraphs 70-72 of *The Secret History of the Mongols*<sup>1</sup> (hereafter SH) vividly describe how Yisügei Ba'atur's widow Hö'elün<sup>2</sup> was ostracized by the two widows of Ambaqai Qan<sup>3</sup>, Örbei and Soqatai, who excluded her from the important sacrifice to the souls of the ancestors.

The reason for such a drastic action on the part of the two ladies — an action the consequences of which were indeed dramatic for they ultimately affected the course of world history<sup>4</sup> — was the rivalry between the

<sup>1</sup> *Yüan-ch'ao pi-shih* 元朝秘史. References are to the Commercial Press photolithographic edition in *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an san-pien* 四部叢刊三編, Shanghai, 1936. For the Mongolian text in transcription see L. LIGETI, *Histoire secrète des Mongols*, «Monumenta Linguae Mongolicae Collecta», I, Budapest, 1971; I. DE RACHEWILTZ, *Index to the Secret History of the Mongols*, «Uralic and Altaic Series», 121, Bloomington, 1972, Part One. For *addenda et corrigenda* to these two text editions see I. DE RACHEWILTZ in *Asia Major*, 18, 1973, 229-231; and in *The Mongolia Society Newsletter*, n.s. 1: Dec. 1985, 9-13. The best English translation and, indeed, the most reliable in any language, is *The Secret History of the Mongols For the First Time Done into English out of the Original Tongue and Provided with an Exegetical Commentary* by FRANCIS WOODMAN CLEAVES, I (Translation), Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1982. In the present article I shall, however, give my own translation of the passages cited.

<sup>2</sup> In the SH she is usually called either Hö'elün Eke («Mother Hö'elün») or Hö'elün Üjin («Lady Hö'elün»). See Cleaves, *op. cit.*, 242a.

<sup>3</sup> Ambaqai was a chief of the Mongol tribe and the «ancestor», i.e. founder, of the Tayi' i'ut clan (*oboq*). He was named by Qabul Qan as his successor, although he belonged to the collateral line of Čaraqai Lingqu. The rulership of the Mongqol reverted to the line of Qabul with the election of Qutulā Qan, the grandfather of Yisügei Ba'atur and great-grandfather of Temüjin, the future Činggis Qan (see the SH §§ 52-57). All these personages held only the title of *qan* ('chieftain, ruler'), but in the SH they were retrospectively designated as *qa'an* (= *qaγan*), i.e. 'emperor'. On this anachronism see P. Pelliot in P. PELLIOU et L. HAMBIS, tr. & ann., *Histoire des Campagnes de Gengis Khan*. *Cheng-wou ts'in-tcheng lou*, I, Leiden, 1951, 14-15, n. 3; I. DE RACHEWILTZ, «Qan, Qa'an and the Seal of Güyüg», in K. SAGASTER and M. WEIERS, eds, *Documenta barbarorum. Festschrift für Walther Heissig zum 70. Geburtstag*, Wiesbaden, 1983, 272-281.

<sup>4</sup> This is no exaggeration, for the career of Hö'elün's son Temüjin as tribal chief and, later as world conqueror, was largely determined by the events that followed the loss of the

two leading clans of the Kiyat Borjigit and the Tayiči'ut, which had been vying for supremacy over the Mongqol tribe<sup>5</sup>. The former was the clan to which Yisügei belonged, whose members were in direct line of succession through Qaidu Qan and Qabul Qan; the latter, whose members (agnates of the Kiyat Borjigit) belonged however to a collateral branch of Qaidu's family, based their right to leadership on Qabul's personal nomination of Ambaqai as his successor just prior to his demise.

After the premature and violent deaths of both Ambaqai and Yisügei, the issue of tribal leadership remained unresolved, with the two clans now led by the widows of the deceased chiefs in a state of latent conflict. As rightly pointed out by Ligeti, the sacrifice to the princely ancestors was an important ceremony which could be performed only by the restricted circle of heirs of their princely power. By excluding Yisügei's widow, Örbei and Soqatai intended to oust her from this power, which at the time was more imaginary than real<sup>6</sup>. It also gave the Tayiči'ut the pretext for breaking away from their kinsmen as a first step towards regaining the leadership<sup>7</sup>, taking advantage of the fact that Hö'elün was then apparently in a much weaker position to assert the hereditary rights of her young sons. This is confirmed by the subsequent account of the SH relating how, after the confrontation following the two widows' action and the departure *en masse* of the Tayiči'ut, Hö'elün was unable to rally her own subjects, who switched their loyalty to the Tayiči'ut and left her and her children to fend for themselves (see the SH §§ 71-73).

The episode concerning Hö'elün's exclusion from the sacrifice to the ancestors is told as follows in § 70 of the SH:

family fortunes and the feud with the Tayiči'ut — both a direct consequence of Örbei and Soqatai's action.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. O. LATTIMORE, «Chingis Khan and the Mongol Conquests», *Scientific American*, 209, 2, Aug. 1963, 57ff.; J.A. BOYLE, «The Birth and Childhood of Genghis Khan», *Journal of the Anglo-Mongolian Society*, 4, 1, July 1978, 8-13; L.V. CLARK, «The Theme of Revenge in the Secret History of the Mongols», in L.V. CLARK and P.A. DRAGHI, eds, *Aspects of Altaic Civilization II. Proceedings of the XVIII PIAC, Bloomington, June 29-July 5, 1975*, Bloomington, 1978, 38-39.

<sup>6</sup> See L. Ligeti's remarks in *A mongolok titkos története*, Budapest, 1962, 145, n. 70.

<sup>7</sup> We find a parallel situation in Temüjin's breakaway from Jamuqa. See the SH § 118. Cf. Lattimore, *op. cit.*, 60-61.

That spring, when the wives of Ambaqai Qa'an<sup>8</sup>, Örbei<sup>9</sup> and Soqatai, performed the *Qaĵaru Inerü* (sacrifice) to the ancestors<sup>10</sup>, Lady Hö'elün also went, but as she arrived late she was left out (of the sacrificial meal)<sup>11</sup>. Lady Hö'elün said to Örbei and Soqatai, 'You say to yourselves that Yisügei Ba'atur is dead<sup>12</sup>, and as my sons<sup>13</sup> are not grown yet, you deprive me of the share (of the offerings) to the ancestors<sup>14</sup>, and of the sacrificial meat and drink that have been left over<sup>15</sup>. Isn't this so? You have come to the point of eating under my very eyes (without asking me to partake of the food) and of breaking camp without (so much as) awakening me!<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> See above, n. 3.

<sup>9</sup> This name can be read Orbai or Örbei; the latter reading is, however, preferable as it is supported by the corresponding passage in the *Altan tobči* by Blo-bzañ bstan-'jin, i.e. the so-called *Altan tobči* (nova). See L. LIGETI, *Histoire secrète des Mongols. Texte en écriture ouïgoure incorporé dans la chronique Altan tobči de Blo-bzan bstan-'jin*, «Monumenta Linguae Mongolicae Collecta» VI, Budapest, 1974, 36, § 70.

<sup>10</sup> Lit., «to the Great Ones» (*yekes-e*), i.e. to the souls of the eminent ancestors of the tribe or clan.

<sup>11</sup> Lit., «she was left behind (the others)» (*qojida'uldaju*) — as the other participants in the ceremony had all been given a share of the food offerings, there was no share left for Hö'elün.

<sup>12</sup> Lit., «You say, 'Has Yisügei Ba'atur (not) died?' (*Yisügei Ba'atur-i ükübe'ü ke'ejü*). This, and the following clause ending with *yekin qojida'ulumui ta*, lit., 'why do you leave me behind?', are rhetorical questions which I have rephrased in my translation.

<sup>13</sup> I.e., the four sons of Yisügei and Hö'elün: Temüjin, Joci Qasar, Qači'un and Temüge Otčigin. They had also one daughter, Temülün.

<sup>14</sup> Lit., «part (= share) of the Great Ones» (*yekes-ün kešig*), i.e. the portion or share of the food offered to the souls of the ancestors which was burnt in the ground (see further on). On the important term *kešig* (mo. [= Written Mong.] *keseġ*) see A. MOSTAERT, *Sur quelques passages de l'Histoire secrète des Mongols*, repr. from the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 13, 1950, 14, 1951, and 15, 1952, Cambridge, Mass., 1953, [21-22], [245-246], [249]; L. LIGETI, «Le sacrifice offert aux ancêtres dans l'Histoire secrète», *Acta Orientalia Hung.*, 27, 1973, 150-151.

<sup>15</sup> They are called in Mongolian *bile'ür* and *sarqut*, two technical terms of the sacrifice meaning respectively «remainder of the sacrificial meat» and «remainder of the sacrificial drink». The Chinese interlinear gloss renders *sarqut* as «sacrificial meat» (*Yüan-ch'ao pi-shih* 2, 2a: ㄆㄨ), but the correct meaning is no doubt as given above. See G. DOERFER, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, I-IV, Wiesbaden, 1963-75, No. 1236; LIGETI, «Le sacrifice», 151-161.

<sup>16</sup> This entire section, as well as § 71 and part of § 72 of the SH, are translated and discussed in MOSTAERT, *op. cit.*, [14-24].

In the above section, the sacrifice in question is called *Qajaru Inerü*, an expression which the Chinese interlinear translation renders as «sacrifice of (= consisting of) burning food in the ground», making it appear as if the word *qajaru* means «in the ground» and *inerü* «sacrifice of burning food»<sup>17</sup>.

Both the Mongolian expression and the Chinese interpretation have been discussed by modern scholars who have pointed out the serious difficulties in explaining this obscure expression from the linguistic point of view<sup>18</sup>. They, and other scholars, have also investigated the nature of the sacrifice itself on the basis of additional information supplied by the Chinese and European medieval sources. As a result, its general characteristics are now known. Before we deal with the designation of the sacrifice it may be useful to see what it consisted of in the first place.

This ceremony for the dead is very ancient and textual evidence indicates that it was already held in Liao and Chin times (10th-13th c.); it was performed as an imperial ritual during the Yüan dynasty and apparently it was still carried out by the Manchus in the early 17th century<sup>19</sup>.

Essentially, the sacrifice to the ancestors, or «food-burning sacrifice», consisted in a simple ceremony performed in spring (and, possibly, at other

<sup>17</sup> 地裏燒飯祭不已. See *Yüan-ch'ao pi-shih* 2, 1b, where the first two characters are the gloss belonging to the word *qajaru*, and the other four the gloss belonging to the word *inerü*.

<sup>18</sup> See PELLIOU et HAMBIS, *op. cit.*, 323; MOSTAERT, *op. cit.*, [16-18]; LIGETI, *A mongolok titkos története*, 145, n. 70; and, especially, «Le sacrifice», 146 and n. 4; OZAWA SHIGEO 小沢重男, *Genchō hishi zenshaku (chū) 元朝歴史全訳 (中)*, Tokyo, 1985, 13-16, n. 1.

<sup>19</sup> See K.A. WITTOGEL and FÈNG CHIA-SHÈNG, *History of Chinese Society: Liao (907-1125)*, Philadelphia, 1949, 284, n. 219; H. FRANKE, «Some Folkloristic Data in the Dynastic History of the Chin», in S. ALLAN and A.P. COHEN, eds, *Legend, Lore, and Religion in China: Essays in Honor of Wolfram Eberhard on His Seventieth Birthday*, S. Francisco, 1979, 142-143; MOSTAERT, *op. cit.*, [18] and [18-20], n. 14; P. RATCHNEVSKY, «Über den mongolischen Kult am Hofe der Grosskhane in China», in L. LIGETI, ed., *Mongolian Studies*, «Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica» XIV, Amsterdam, 1970, 429-430; idem, «La condition de la femme mongole au 12<sup>e</sup>/13<sup>e</sup> siècle», in W. HEISSIG, J.R. KRUEGER, F.J. OINAS, E. SCHÜTZ, eds, *Tractata Altaica Denis Sinor Sexagenario Optime de Rebus Altaicis Merito Dedicata*, Wiesbaden, 1976, 521. Important supplementary data on the sacrifice to the ancestors are found in LIGETI, «Le sacrifice», 146-161. With regard to the time of the sacrifice, we know that in the Yüan period the ceremony was held in the ninth lunar month of each year, as well as on a day after the sixteenth day of the twelfth month. See RATCHNEVSKY, «Über den mongolischen Kult», 429.

times) by, or with the participation of, the female members of the family of the deceased acting as assistants. A hole was dug in the ground in which the food offering of meat, duly aspersed with kumis or other alcoholic drink, was burned. A prayer, or invocation, was recited and at the end the assistants shared among themselves, and consumed the remainder of the food and drink, thus partaking of the «feast» offered to the ancestors souls. Hence only part of the food offerings, which in the later Yüan imperial ceremony consisted of different kinds of meats and alcoholic beverages<sup>20</sup>, was actually burnt. This was what was technically known as «the ancestors' share» (*yekes-ün keš'ig*). The rest of the meat and drink, called *bile'ür* and *sarqut* respectively, was consumed, as already stated, by the participants. From the section of the SH quoted above, it appears that Hö'elün was excluded from both phases of the ceremony, i.e. from the offering of food to the ancestors, as well as from the sacrificial meal following it.

In the SH account there is no mention of a shaman and/or shamaness officiating at the ceremony. Both officiated at the Yüan imperial ceremony, and we may assume that one was present also at the sacrifice in question, since it involved the calling of the soul of the deceased. In the Yüan ritual, «the shamans and shamanesses called the personal names of the (dead) rulers one after the other in the national language and made the offering to them»<sup>21</sup>. In the same ritual, a high-ranking Mongol official, acting as assistant to the shamans, dug the hole in the ground and burnt the meats mixed with liquor, sweet wine and kumis<sup>22</sup>. This was almost certainly the function of the ladies-assistants in the SH account, as confirmed also by John of Pian di Carpine's narrative which mentions this type of sacrifice<sup>23</sup>.

The invocation, however, was done by the shaman or shamaness, and it is in relation to this part of the ceremony that I shall now discuss the

<sup>20</sup> As well as offerings of rolls of fabric and silk. See *Yüan-shih* 元史, *Chung-hua shu-chü* 中華書局 ed., Peking, 1976, 77.1924; cf. RATCHNEVSKY, *loc. cit.*

<sup>21</sup> See *Yüan-shih*, *loc. cit.*; cf. RATCHNEVSKY, *loc. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> The Italian Minorite, who was a witness to the same ceremony held at Güyüg's encampment in Mongolia in 1246, writes, «And also the women often assemble to burn bones for the men's souls, as we saw with our own eyes and learned from others there». See C. Dawson, ed., *The Mongol Mission. Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, tr. by a nun of Stanbrook Abbey, London and New York, 1955, 13. For the Latin text of this passage in the *Ystoria Mongalorum* see A. VAN DEN WYNGAERT, *Sinica Franciscana, I: Itinera et relationes Fratrum Minorum saeculi XIII et XIV*, Quaracchi-Firenze, 1929 (repr. 1962), 42-43 (III. 12).

enigmatic expression *qaǰaru inerü*. We know that the purpose of the invocation was to call the souls of the ancestors to the ritual meal so as to secure their continued blessing on their descendants. As such, the invocation must have contained, beside the name of the ancestor whose soul was called, a word or expression entreating him to come to the place of sacrifice. That the word *qaǰaru* refers to the place of sacrifice there is hardly any doubt: this is in fact the way it is understood by several scholars beginning with Haenisch and including Prof. Ozawa<sup>24</sup>. *Qaǰaru* (<*qaǰar* + *-ru*) is formed from *qaǰar* (mo. *ǰaǰar*) «ground, soil, earth, place», with the suffix of direction *-ru* (/ *-rü*), and its meaning can only be «to (= in the direction of, towards) the ground (or place)»<sup>25</sup>. As for *inerü*, Haenisch relates it to a hypothetical verb *\*ine-* «to sacrifice», whereas Ozawa equates it to *inaru* «to this side»<sup>26</sup>. As already noted by Mostaert, *inerü* < *\*ine-* is untenable<sup>27</sup>;

<sup>24</sup> See. E. HAENISCH, *Wörterbuch zu Manǰol un niuca tobca'an*, Leipzig, 1939 (repr. Wiesbaden, 1962), 82; *idem*, tr., *Die geheime Geschichte der Mongolen*, 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1948, 12; OZAWA, *op. cit.*, 15, n. 1. Cf., however, MOSTAERT, *op. cit.*, [17-18]; and LIGETI, «Le sacrifice», 146, n. 4. I do not find the reservations expressed by these two scholars justified, since we are dealing here with a special terminology almost certainly going back to an ancient (Proto-Mongolian?) stage of the language. See below, nn. 25 and 26. Haenisch's interpretation is, on the other hand, simply based on the Chinese interlinear translation quoted above (see n. 17).

<sup>25</sup> For the directive suffix *-ru/rü* in the Turkic and Mongolian language see M. LEWICKI, *Przyrostki przysłówkowe-ra ~ -rā, -ru ~ -rü, -ri ~ -ri, w językach altajskich*, «Collectanea Orientalia», Nr. 15, Wilno, 1938, 17ff. Although this suffix is no longer productive in Written Mongolian, where it occurs in a relatively small number of words (all adverbs, also used as postpositions), this is not the case in the living Mongolian languages, where it occurs (in Buriat, Ordos, etc.) as a regular directive ending of nouns. See *ibid.*, 23-25; N.N. POPPE, *Grammatika buryat-mongol'skogo yazyka*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1938, 181-182. I think that a word like *manaǰaru* (= *manaǰaru*) «tomorrow morning; early in the morning», which occurs several times in the SH (also in its alternative form *manaǰari*), is at the origin a noun with the directive (temporal) suffix *-ru ~ -ri* (< *manaǰar* + *-ru ~ -ri*, lit. «towards the morrow»); cf. mo. *manaǰarsi* (> *marǰasi*) «tomorrow», where the adverbial suffix *-si* plays the same role as *-ru* in *manaǰaru*. Therefore, I cannot share the opinion, expressed by Mostaert (*loc. cit.*), that *qaǰaru* (*ǰaǰaru*) is merely a variant of *qaǰar* (*ǰaǰar*). As for Ligeti (*loc. cit.*), he gives no satisfactory explanation why he regards the transcription *qaǰaru* as «indéfendable», his objection being based only on the polyvalence of the Chinese syllable *lu* ㄌㄨ, used in transcribing Mongolian *-l* or *-r*, as well as *-lu* or *-ru*.

<sup>26</sup> See HAENISCH, *loc. cit.*; OZAWA, *loc. cit.*

<sup>27</sup> MOSTAERT, *op. cit.*, [17]; cf. LIGETI, *loc. cit.*

*inerü* = *inaru* is, however, possible<sup>28</sup>. Prof. Ozawa understands the passage in question as meaning that Örbei and Soqatai «had proceeded to this side (*inerü*), to the burial ground (*qaĵaru*), for (the sacrifice) to the ancestors»<sup>29</sup>.

Although I accept the above interpretation of the individual words, which seems to me plausible, my understanding of the passage is at variance with that of Prof. Ozawa. I think that the expression *qaĵaru inerü*, which Mostaert rightly calls «une expression toute faite»<sup>30</sup>, actually constitutes the invocatory formula uttered by the shaman. This would explain the use of the directive in both words, which I understand as meaning «To the ground, to this side (i.e. in this direction)», i.e. «(Come) to the ground (or place, of sacrifice), to this (= our) side (or down here)». This formula would of course be repeated each time together with the name of each ancestor whose soul would, in turn, be called by the shaman to «come down» and join the sacrificial feast as it were.

Finally, I think that the invocatory formula was also used, as a synecdoche, for the whole ceremony, and, indeed, as the designation of the sacrifice, much in the same way as, for instance, in the Christian religion, a set word or expression is traditionally used to designate a whole ceremony, or prayer, in which that word or expression (often an invocation)

<sup>28</sup> For front ~ back vocalism see, e.g., SH *ümere*, mo. *umara* «behind, north»; SH *söyü-*, mo. *soyu-* «to instruct». For further examples, see B. Ya. VLADIMIROV, *Sravnitel'naya grammatika mongol'skogo pismennogo yazyka i khalkhaskogo narečiya. Vvedenie i fonetika*, Leningrad, 1929, 131-133, § 68. *Inaru* (<\**ina* + *-ru*) is an adverb of place formed also with the directive suffix *-ru* (*-rü*), meaning «to (towards) this side, in this direction», and, as a temporal adverb/postposition, «prior, before, up to, from, since»; cf. *inaĵsi* «here, hither, to this place; since». See N. POPPE, *Grammar of Written Mongolian*, Wiesbaden, 1954 (repr. 1964, 1974), 59, § 215; F.H. BUCK, *Comparative Study of Postpositions in Mongolian Dialects and the Written Language*, Cambridge, Mass., 1955, 102, nos. 42 and 43; 124, no. 42. For Turkic (Uighur) *maru* «vers le bas», see J.R. HAMILTON, *Le conte bouddhique du Bon et du Mauvais Prince en version ouïgoure*, Paris, 1971, 105a. But Turkic has also *ilerü* meaning, «before, in front (of place); forwards, before (of time)». See G. CLAUSON, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish*, Oxford, 1972, 144a-b; cf. LEWICKI, *op. cit.*, 18-19. Now, I wonder whether a form like *inerü* may not be due to a possible early contamination with Turkic *ilerü*, particularly in view of the very common alternation *l* ~ *n*. This problem, however, deserves further investigation.

<sup>29</sup> OZAWA, *op. cit.*, 13.

<sup>30</sup> MOSTAERT, *loc. cit.*



occurs<sup>31</sup>. It seems to me that the above interpretation, albeit tentative, is worthy of consideration and perhaps more acceptable than the ones presented so far.

IGOR DE RACHEWILTZ

<sup>31</sup> This applies not only to most prayers (*Ave Maria*, *Pater Noster*, *Credo*, etc.), but to the very name for the Eucharistic sacrifice, the «Mass» (Lat. *missa* < *mittere*) — from the words of dismissal at the end of the service: *Ite, missa est*, i.e. «Go, (the congregation) is dismissed».