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Heroic Legitimation in Traditional Nomadic Societies

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It is a privilege to participate in the scholarly rite of *Festschrift* production. It is even more of an honor when this participation contributes to the celebration of the life and scholarship of one who has been an object of personal veneration since young adulthood.

Of all the scholarly publications of Dr. Nibley, the ones that I enjoyed the most were his contributions on questions of steppe nomadism. After concentrated study on Chinese historiography concerning the nomads both during and since graduate school, I find that his works continue to be not only relevant, but indeed unique, in their scope. For none has attempted, let alone succeeded, in setting the steppe cultures in the context of ancient worldwide practices as Nibley has; nor has anyone else who has delved into the origins of practices as varied as royal hunts, taxing, and charitable contributions been able to trace such practices with comparable energy and erudition to Inner Asian rituals.

Nibley's most extended treatment of nomadism came as part of his effort to elucidate the old world settings for the Book of Mormon travels of Lehi and the Jaredites in his *Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites*.¹ *The World of the Jaredites* sets the wanderings of the Jaredites in both ecological and social environments. Ecologically, we see the vast movements of hordes and herds across the steppes

in great wagons as now hunting, now herding, and again, now farming, the Jaredites seek a new home in true steppe style. The terrain, the weather, the type and pattern of the daily round of activities – it is all familiar to the student of nomadism. Socially, we view the blood relations and blood oaths, the contention between heroic khans, the sudden gathering and swift dispersal of the hosts, the oriental intrigues and opulent largess that lay behind the rise of the great men, and the more martial aspects of the “logistics of depredation” (borrowing a phrase from Professor John Smith at the University of California at Berkeley).

An earlier and more narrowly focused work is “The Hierocentric State.”² Here Nibley sets the nomadic custom of the *quriltai*, or election *cum* elevation ceremony, in the framework of worldwide royal New Year assemblies. Although not dealing exclusively with the steppe variations of this ritual theme, Nibley’s great contribution to nomadic studies in this article, even above his exhaustive examination of universal kingship and the role played by the king and his ritual hunts, progresses, and palaces, is his identification of the origin of this concept and these rituals as Central Asiatic. Only recently has the same provenance, by way of the Aryans, been tentatively posited as a “working hypothesis” by Joseph Fletcher, an historian of the steppes.³

Nibley again uncovers the steppe origin of widespread religiopolitical practices in his “Tenting, Toll, and Taxing.”⁴ Again we see vast movements across broad steppes, with the tent as holy center and the royal progression taking center stage. The interrelationship between the toll and tax on the one hand, and rite of passage and ritual combat on the other, is ingeniously and convincingly portrayed.

The earliest of the Nibley nomadic contributions is his study of the role played by the marked arrow in the formation of the state. His “The Arrow, The Hunter, and the State”⁵ examines various religious, political, logistic, and

social functions of this ubiquitous instrument. The importance of this study lies in the illumination it sheds on the manifold uses of the arrow on the steppes. For it was not only the supreme symbol of authority, but, as with the famous "Parthian shot," or terrifying whistling arrow of the Hsiung-nu, the chief means of enforcing a khan's commands or accomplishing his martial schemes.

About the only category of primary sources that Nibley did not delve into directly was the Chinese historical documents (although he did make good use of studies based on them, such as those by McGovern or Wittfogel and Feng).⁶ The present notes are based directly on these documents and their portrayal of nomadic legitimation through the rise of great heroes. Heroic legitimation seems an appropriate subject for a *Festschrift* dedicated to one who has been many a Mormon scholar's hero. It is offered as a small token of appreciation for many years of instructive and pleasurable reading.

Heroic Legitimation in Traditional Nomadic Societies

The concept of legitimation among the nomads is inseparable from the personal charisma and martial qualities of great heroes.⁷ Many factors go into defining a hero in nomadic terms: aristocratic lineage, sagacious leadership, military prowess, loyalty-inspiring charisma, wealth or the promise of it and attendant largess, and the sanction of divine approval or appointment. Since the economic basis of nomadic society is almost entirely grounded on the personal participation and productivity of every member of the society, it follows that leadership roles in such a society are naturally assumed by those most successful in the everyday logistics of nomadism. That is, legitimacy is earned; if it is inherited, it must be maintained through personal performance, lost through default, or shored up

by a nonnomadic value system which happens under acculturation such as islamicization or sinification.

Since personal performance is at the heart of the maintenance, if not always the initial acquisition, of legitimation in traditional nomadic societies, our discussion will proceed by examining the various factors that constitute a legitimate leader in nomadic terms. We will then examine the importance of these factors as exhibited—and exploited—by traditional nomadic heroes in the formation and maintenance of intertribal confederacies, states, and empires. This discussion will focus on the patterns of succession followed by the Hsiung-nu, T'u-chüeh and Mongols.⁸

Personal Prowess

"Individualism" was the basis of the ruling class in traditional Mongolian society; that is, individual effort and achievement earned the respect of one's fellows.⁹ It also garnered a sufficiency of material goods which enabled a nomad ambitious for power to point to himself as exemplar: following him would insure successful nomadizing, provide a share in his personal fortune, and could even lead to opportunities for pillaging. However, the test of performance was the key. No matter what, the leader or potential leader had to be able "to acquire charisma through successful activity."¹⁰ The activity in question usually involved warfare. Several examples follow.

Mo-tu, the founder of the Hsiung-nu confederacy and its first famous Shan-yü (analogous to Khan; r. 209-174 B.C.), gained his position through his prowess as a field commander.¹¹ Another Hsiung-nu Shan-yü, An-kuo (r. A.D. 93-94), was not respected because he had earned no reputation while he was still Worthy King of the Left (the heir to the Shan-yü's see); he only survived one year as Shan-yü until he was killed by one of his own "brave" generals.¹²

After T'u-men (r. ca. A.D. 545-552) assumed the throne

of the T'u-chüeh, his state and position were both expanded through victorious warfare.¹³ The Orkhon inscriptions are full of the martial exploits of Bilgä Khagan, İlteriš Khagan, Prince Kül, and Bilgä Tonyukuk that substantiate their right to rule.¹⁴ The Mongols also prized martial valor as one prerequisite for leadership. We need not cite specific instances here.¹⁵

Even more basic than military prowess and renown was the ability to insure the economic survival of the group. The early history of the T'u-chüeh provides an instructive instance of this: The leader of the first horde, A-pang-pa, was stupid and ignorant; his state was hence extinguished. His desolate descendants were saved by his grandnephew, who gave them fire. Since he had saved them, they nominated him ruler.¹⁶ Another T'u-chüeh, A-shih-na, was elected ruler by his brethren, even though he was the son of a concubine, because he jumped the highest at the side of a tree!¹⁷ Bilgä Khagan boasted, "I gathered all the poor and destitute people together. I made the poor people wealthy and the few people numerous."¹⁸

Aristocratic Heritage and Legitimate Lineages

Privileged clans appear among the early Scythians. The "Royal" Scythians dominated the other Scythians, and considered them as slaves.¹⁹ John H. Kautsky defines the aristocracy as members of society who live off the surplus produced by peasants. In the case of nomads, they must control a number of villages in order to be aristocrats. For him, the origin of nomadic empires was traceable to the founding of nomadic aristocracies by the "superimposition" of a conquering ruling class on the peasantry.²⁰ But this interpretation does not account for the presence of aristocracies among native nomadic states that had not conquered sizeable sedentary populations. A. M. Khazanov has posited the provenance of aristocracies from other than economic processes, in particular sociopolitical pro-

cesses.²¹ These sociopolitical planes were most likely structured on the basis of differing degrees of prestige inherited from august ancestors, if the case of the creation of a noble line out of the lineage of Chinggis Khan is any indication of general historical processes.

Chinggis was the fountainhead of Mongol blue blood. William of Rubruck defined a member of the Mongol nobility as being of the family of Chinggis, "who was their first father and lord."²² Later manifestations of Mongolian political entities found their basis of nobility in the imperial lineage. The Kalmucks, for instance, considered their most honored noble clan as descended from the Chinggisid line.²³ Hence it would seem that nobility was the residual honor inherited from ancestors who had earned great distinction. High birth was then a matter of genealogical record or manipulation.²⁴

Regardless of the origin of noble clans, all nomadic societies seemed to have them.²⁵ Among the Hsiung-nu, the Hu-yen, Lan, and Hsü-pu families constituted the aristocracy, and the Hsiung-nu bureaucracy was staffed only by members of these families.²⁶ The clan of A-shih-na, derived from its eponymous founder, was the most honored one of the early T'u-chüeh.²⁷ And the Mongols had hereditary nobility even before the rise of Chinggis Khan.²⁸

The importance of noble birth to support claims of legitimacy among nomads can be seen in the experience of Nurhachi, the founder of Manchu power. The great persecution he endured at the hands of other clan leaders during his rise has been interpreted by one scholar as having been due to their jealousy that he was not of an orthodox line.²⁹ Not only was noble lineage crucial, but usually an essential element was filiation with the one royal or legitimate line. In the case of the Hsiung-nu, the line that produced the Shan-yü was the Luan-t'i clan.³⁰ The T'u-chüeh's royal line was A-shih-na.³¹ The Mongol royal clan was Borjigin; it was termed the "golden lineage" (*altan*

urugh).³² The Mongol royal line later on was further narrowed to include only the issue of Tolui, Chinggis's fourth and youngest son by his principal wife.³³

The Sanction of Heaven and the Legitimation of Religion

Among the Mongols, "the ideological device for consolidating a khan's control was belief in Tenggeri or Tengri (scribally, Tngri), the universal victory-granting sky-god," writes Joseph Fletcher. He believes that this concept was derived from the early Aryans.³⁴ Even though the Hsiung-nu included the worship of heaven/sky among their pantheon, the appearance of the term "Son of Heaven" as part of the official title of the Shan-yü was a later borrowing and elaboration of the Chinese custom.³⁵ Direct descent from heaven, then, was not necessarily part of the earliest manifestations of the Eurasian steppe belief in Tenggeri, although belief in heaven-sanctioned power was.³⁶

The belief in the legitimizing power and conquering might of heaven is most clearly seen among the T'u-chüeh and Mongols. The Orkhon inscriptions record the following on the debt owed by the early Turkish nation to heaven:

I, the Heaven-like and Heaven-born Turkish Bilga Kagan . . . since Heaven was gracious, and since I was granted with fortune, I succeeded to the throne. . . . By the grace of Heaven, he took the realm of those who had a realm, and captured the Kagan of those who had had a Kagan. . . . Due to the fact that Heaven granted strength, the soldiers of my father, the Kagan, were like wolves, and his enemies were like sheep.³⁷

The sources on the Mongols are just as explicit, and much more numerous. A prayer offered to heaven by Chinggis himself at an early stage in his career has been preserved by Rashīd al-Dīn. Temujin sought heaven's aid in the following words: "If you know that my intention is just, send me power and victory from above and order

that your angels, men, peris and spirits above give me their aid."³⁸ An angel, in fact, did appear in the guise of an eagle and revealed the *yasa* or Mongol legal code to Chinggis, according to the account of Grigor of Akanc'.³⁹ It was the will of God that this *yasa* be imposed upon the people of the world so that order could be maintained.⁴⁰

It was crucial to Chinggis's plans that his fellow tribesmen recognize him as the recipient of heaven's mandate. Numerous portents and signs served to signify this fact.⁴¹ The fact that Chinggis was miraculously protected from arrows and endured severe wounds without succumbing was proof enough of heaven's favor to the less spiritually attuned of his fellows; and his unfailing success in battle virtually guaranteed it.⁴² They were thenceforth determined to carry out heaven's will and assist Chinggis in gaining sway over the whole world.

This, then, was the great ideological element behind the Mongols' grand scheme of conquest; it sustained the drive for conquest in the face of innumerable foes stretched over vast distances of the Asian continent. Neither were the Mongols ashamed to proclaim their sacred calling to the world. Indeed, it formed the cornerstone of their foreign policy: ambassadors were dispatched with the proclamation to submit to heaven's will or be swept away.⁴³ From the point of view of states vulnerable to the Mongol might, this ideology provided a welcome rationale for submitting. It also helped to rationalize the victory of the "barbarian" Mongols over the superior civilization of the Islamic East.⁴⁴

Often the legitimacy that communication with heaven can confer was claimed by a nomadic ruler through alliance with a powerful shaman, or by his assumption of the role of shaman himself. The election of A-shih-na as ruler of the T'u-chüeh because he jumped the highest at a tree must be seen in this light, for when "a shaman climbs up a tree . . . he ascends symbolically to the highest

heaven."⁴⁵ His physical prowess at the sacred spot, then, exhibited his spiritual fitness. Chinggis himself deposed the shaman Teb Tenggeri because he was a rival for the instructions – and hence the favor – of heaven.⁴⁶ The religious role exercised by Chinggis Khan, including his function as a shaman, was so powerful that after his death he was made to continue in it as the head of a cult.⁴⁷ The presence of an assisting shaman, or the exercise of this role by the leader himself, then, was an important element in obtaining legitimacy among the nomads.⁴⁸

On a broader social level, organized religion also had a role to play in the legitimizing effort of nomad conquerors. The Mongols, for instance, made use of each of the religions they encountered to buttress their claims of legitimate rule.⁴⁹ But organized religion, as opposed to shamanistic beliefs and practices, was usually only politically useful after the initial conquest of a sedentary people had occurred; its adoption was therefore part of the process of acculturation (e.g., islamicization or sinification) even if the initial motivation for doing so was to assist in the consolidation of authority. This subject, then, is best treated in the context of acculturation, not legitimation.⁵⁰

The Rise of Nomadic Supratribal Leaders

One important characteristic of nomadic empires is their ephemeral existence. The main factor in this ephemerality lay in the element of personal leadership, the foundation of such empires. Joseph Fletcher has succinctly explained this in the following manner:

Steppe empires came into existence only through the efforts of individual aspirants for the office of supratribal ruler. . . . Being the ruler's creation, a steppe empire – as opposed to a confederation – depended for its existence upon his person. When he died, it ran a risk of collapse. . . . The continuation of an empire

therefore depended heavily upon the ruler's person, much less upon his office.⁵¹

The rise of a nomadic leader to the supratribal level seems to have been a series of stages in the process of acquiring renown through successful depredation. The experience of Temujin's rise as narrated in the "Secret History" is the best example.⁵² But as it is a drawn-out, detailed account, the experience of the Turkish Khagan İlteriş cited *in medias res* from the Orkhon Inscriptions will reveal more than any individual passage from the Mongol history:

My father, the kagan, went off with seventeen men. Having heard the news that [İlteriş] was marching off, those who were in towns went up mountains and those who were on mountains came down [from there]; thus they gathered and numbered to seventy men. . . . Having gone on campaigns forward and backward, he gathered together and collected men; they all numbered seven hundred men, [my father the kagan] organized and ordered the people who had lost their state and their kagan . . . in accordance with the rules of my ancestors. He [also organized there] the Tolis and the Tardus [peoples], and gave them a *yabgu* and a *şad*.⁵³

The fact that İlteriş was already a Khagan certainly helped in his recruitment. But this prestige only garnered seventy men (up from an initial seventeen). It was his campaigns that gained him an increasing amount of followers. He later organized his people and those he had absorbed according to the prescribed procedures, probably out of the desire to legitimize his actions through hoary precedent more than any need for organizational efficiency.

After an aspirant for the position of supratribal leader had demonstrated his success as a battle commander, he was able to offer himself as *the* leader to follow in ever-ambitious exploits that needed the concerted effort of the tribes. As "ecologically, no social organization was needed

above the level of the tribe,"⁵⁴ these supratribal exploits transcended the mundane humdrum of mere ecological existence and entered the realm in which the stuff of epics was formed and heroes forged. Indeed, the desire to duplicate the great deeds recited of the heroes of the traditional epics must be one of the most important factors for aspiring to the position of supratribal leader, whether Hsiung-nu Shan-yü, Turkish Šad, or Mongol Khan, and leading his hordes to glorious conquest.⁵⁵

Just as the supratribal organization came into being for other than solely ecological reasons, such as warfare on a large scale, so it was that only through such activities were both the rationale and raw materials for the continuation of the supratribal organization maintained. Thomas Allsen explains that external war was an essential counterweight to the "centrifugal tendencies" of nomadic life and offered the possibilities of booty, grants of land, increased annual stipends, and advancement in rank for the princes and commanders who participated along with the supreme leader.⁵⁶ Indeed, warfare was such an essential element in the *raison d'être* of nomadic confederacies and empires that Joseph Fletcher considered the decimal organization of military command as one of the two devices, one structural and one ideological, for unifying and expanding such political entities.⁵⁷

Let us now conclude our discussion of nomadic legitimation by examining the process of succession to the highest office, that of steppe emperor, among the Hsiung-nu, the T'u-chüeh, and the Mongols.

Nomadic Succession

The question of succession lies at the heart of the problem of legitimation in nomadic societies. This is because the many factors that impact on the success of an individual's claim to legitimacy—personal prowess, aristocratic birth and legitimate lineage, the ideological role of Tenggeri

and the function of shamans, and the rise of supratribal leaders—combine into a showdown of power politics in which ideological arguments must face the threat of having to be backed up with military might. This is also true because the continuance of a particular political body depends upon the successful legitimation of the new ruler. For nomadic successions were often the occasion for bloody outbreaks of civil war; opportunities for actual combat and demonstrations of field generalship are, it is true, good tests for determining the fitness among rival claimants for rulership.⁵⁸ But if in these internecine struggles the winning faction fails to persuade the followers of the loser of the legitimacy of its victory, then the latter will often go elsewhere and found a separate political entity.⁵⁹ The process of succession, then, must legitimize the new ruler in order to insure the political and social survival of a nomadic supratribal entity.

There were two traditions of succession in nomadic societies, patrilineal and lineal, both based upon hereditary ties of kinship. All qualifying factors such as personal prowess and birthright being equal, the decisive element in choosing between patrilineal (father-to-son) and lineal (brother-to-brother) succession was the principle of tanistry, which principle, explains Joseph Fletcher, "held that the tribe should be led by the best qualified member of the chiefly house. At the chief's death, in other words, the succession did not pass automatically, in accordance with any principle of seniority such as primogeniture, but rather was supposed to go to the most competent of the eligible heirs."⁶⁰ The same was true of succession on the supratribal level.

Sometimes a particular strain of nomads utilized either patrilineal or lineal modes of succession, with tanistry again deciding who among the preferred generation should succeed. The early Hsiung-nu, on principle, opted for patrilineal, especially primogenital, succession.⁶¹ The

aberrations from the mode of patrilineal/primogenital succession occur chiefly toward the end of the Hsiung-nu empire. With the split into Northern and Southern empires (caused by a succession dispute),⁶² lineal succession occurred almost exclusively, perhaps due to the immense influence of Hu-han-hsieh, for at his deathbed he made his sons promise to transmit the throne lineally among themselves.⁶³ After Shan-yü Hsiu-li (r. 128-140), various families vied in setting up their own candidates; it was not until seven years later that Chu-chu again established a line that maintained itself through regular succession, mostly through primogeniture, until the office of Shan-yü was done away with by Ts'ao Ts'ao in 216.⁶⁴

The same tension that existed among the Hsiung-nu between the competing modes of lineal and patrilineal succession was present among the T'u-chüeh, as the following extended quotation will reveal:

When T'a-pa (d. 580) was about to die he spoke to his son An-lo, saying: "I have heard that in terms of intimacy of relationship nothing exceeds that of father and son. [However], my elder brother was not close to his son and hence entrusted the throne to me. When I die, you must yield to Ta-lo-pien [An-lo's older brother; he eventually founded the Western T'u-chüeh]." After he expired, all [the great ones] within the state were about to set up Ta-lo-pien, but the masses would not agree since his mother was of low birth. An-lo was veritably of the nobility, and had been all along venerated by the T'u-chüeh. Sheh-t'u was the last to arrive; he spoke to all within the state, saying: "If you establish An-lo, then I will lead my brothers in serving him; if you establish Ta-lo-pien, I will surely remain on guard within my own territory and await you with sharp swords and long spears." Sheh-t'u was the eldest and was furthermore heroic; none within the state dared resist him. In the end they then set up An-lo as the successor.⁶⁵

Besides showing that patrilineal succession was the preferred method among the T'u-chüeh,⁶⁶ the above story also illustrates the importance of both personal prowess and high birth to qualify one for an office that is obtained by inheritance.⁶⁷

Among the early Mongols, both patrilineal and lineal succession took place, because, as pointed out by Thomas Allsen, the Mongols made an attempt through "bloody tanistry" (called "common consent" by Marco Polo) at succession through nomination of the best qualified candidate.⁶⁸ These elections took place at general gatherings of nobility called *quriltai*, especially convened for such a purpose.⁶⁹ Temujin received the epithet of Chinggis to go along with his newly bestowed title of Khan at a *quriltai* convened on the Onon river in 1206.⁷⁰ The best-known Mongolian succession assembly was, however, the one of 1245 that elected Güyüg; Plano Carpini was in attendance and left as detailed a description as could be expected from an outside observer.⁷¹ Notwithstanding this nod toward democratic participation, the *quriltai* ceremony seemed to have been a *pro forma* procedure that merely confirmed the candidate who had emerged as the consensus choice either through behind-the-scenes maneuvering or open conflict. Again, the crucial factors were the personal qualities of the candidates themselves and how these qualities translated into influence. As H. Desmond Martin explains, even "if able to voice their opinions in open council, the amount of influence the imperial family and aristocracy were able to exert varied greatly according to circumstances and the personality of the reigning khagan."⁷² In most nomadic cases, the personality and prowess of the candidates were, finally, even more important than the wishes of a late leader.

Notes

1. Reprinted in Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, the World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites*, vol. 5, *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988).

2. Hugh Nibley, "The Hierocentric State," *Western Political Quarterly* 4 (1951): 226-53.

3. Joseph Fletcher, "The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46 (1980): 11-50; see also discussion at n. 34 below.

4. Hugh Nibley, "Tenting, Toll, and Taxing," *Western Political Quarterly* 19 (1966): 599-630.

5. Hugh Nibley, "The Arrow, The Hunter, and the State," *Western Political Quarterly* 2 (1949): 328-44.

6. Karl A. Wittfogel and Feng Chia-sheng, *History of Chinese Society: Liao (907-1125)*. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s. vol. 36. (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1949); and W. M. McGovern, *The Early Empires of Central Asia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939).

7. The term "hero" is used in the sense of an actual exemplar, living or dead, of cultural values, not as a mythical embodiment of national ethos who performs a ritual function. On the nomadic hero as living exemplar of steppe cultural norms, see Fletcher, "The Mongols," 14.

8. The Hsiung-nu first confronted China ca. A.D. 210; they remained formidable enemies for much of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220); the T'u-chüeh were an early Turkish kingdom, ca. 552-651; the Mongols conquered during the thirteenth century.

9. Lawrence Krader, "The Origin of the State among the Nomads of Asia," in *Pastoral Production and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 229. It was also the basis of one's standing in the community, however low. For example, the Hsiung-nu, the T'u-chüeh, and the Mongols all were said by the Chinese to "abase the old and weak and value the young and strong." Composite translation based on Han shu 94a.3743 [Peking punctuated edition of the twenty-four dynastic histories (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1959-77); hereafter, all references to the dynastic histories will be to this edition] [parallel text of the *Shi chi*, tr. Burton Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian*, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 2:156]; *Chou shu* 50.909 [tr. Liu Mau-tsai, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten aus Geschichte der Ost-Turken (T'u-kue)*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1958), 1:8]; and Chao Hung (1195-1246), *Meng Ta pei lu* 15a [in Wang Kuo-wei, ed., *Meng-ku shih-liao ssu-chung chiao-chu* (Peking: Ch'ing-hua hsüeh-hsiao yen-chiu so, 1926)]. The connection between health/age and performance is obvious. With regard to individual achievement as a leadership quality, compare the observations of Nikolai Muravev, a nineteenth-century

Russian traveler among the Turkmen, cited in A. M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, tr. Julia Crookenden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 175; and Marco Polo, *The Description of the World*, tr. A. C. Moule and Paul Pelliot (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1938), par. 77 on p. 193. Cf. also Ammianus Marcellinus, XXXI, 2, 25.

10. Khazanov, *Nomads*, 167.

11. *Han shu* 94a.3753; Watson, tr., *Grand Historian*, 2:165.

12. *Hou Han shu* 89.2954.

13. *Chou shu* 50.908; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, 1:6.

14. For instance, Talat Tekin, *A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), 275-77, translates an early inscription that records in chronological order the campaigns of Bilgā Khagan when he was 17, 18, 20, 22, 26, 31, 33, and 40 years old.

15. For instance, in his *History of the Mongols*, in Christopher Dawson, ed., *Mission to Asia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 19, John of Plano Carpini records that Chinggis, "a mighty hunter before the Lord . . . went into other territories and any men he could capture and get to join his band he did not let go again. He drew men to himself of his own nation and they followed him as their leader in all kinds of wrong-doing." The wrong-doings which Carpini lists after this all have to do with warring and plundering.

16. Summarizing *Chou shu* 50.908; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, 1:5; and *Pei shih* 99.3286 (tr. Uchida Gimpu et al., *Kiba minzoku shi—seishi Hokuteki den*, 3 vols. [Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1971-73], 2:66).

17. *Chou shu* 50.908; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, 1:6. See text on pp. 569-70 of the present study for the religious significance of this deed.

18. Tekin, *Orkhon Turkic*, 262.

19. Herodotus, IV, 20. John H. Kautsky, *The Politics of Aristocratic Empires* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 54, suggests that the Scythian people themselves were but "a semi-nomadic aristocracy which dominated the settled and agricultural masses." This view had been put forward much earlier by W. W. How and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912), 2:427.

20. Kautsky, *Aristocratic Empires*, 63, 49. See 52-56 for his discussion of the origins of the aristocratic class among conquest states of nomads; chapter 4 of his work treats in general the theme of the origin and development of aristocracies.

21. Khazanov, *Nomads*, 148. Philip C. Salzman, "Inequality and

Oppression in Nomadic Society," in *Pastoral Production and Society*, 429-46, discusses the nonpastoral (i.e., nonnomadic) sources of social inequality.

22. William of Rubruck, *The Journey of William of Rubruck*, in Dawson, ed., *Mission to Asia*, 105.

23. Lawrence Krader, *Social Organization of the Mongol-Turkic Pastoral Nomads* (Hague: Mouton, 1963), 134.

24. The function of genealogies among nomadic societies, according to Khazanov, was to "legitimize social inequality" (Khazanov, *Nomads*, 142). See also Caroline Humphrey in *Pastoral Production and Society*, 235-59.

25. Even the Huns had them, despite Ammianus Marcellinus' comments to the contrary, Otto Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 198-99. For the existence and general outlines of nomadic aristocracies, consult Eberhard, *China und seine westlichen Nachbarn* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978), 269-70; Khazanov, *Nomads*, 148-52; and Fletcher, "The Mongols," 16-17. For a detailed treatment of the Mongol aristocracy, see B. Ya. Vladimirtsov, *Le régime social des Mongols*, tr. Michel Carsow (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1948), 89-100.

26. *Han shu* 94a.3751; Watson, *Grand Historian*, 2:163; for aristocratic office holders among the Hsiung-nu, see Yamada Nobuo, "Formation of the Hsiung-nu Nomadic State," *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* 36 (1982): 575-81.

27. *Pei shih* 99.3285; Uchida et al., *Kiba minzoku shi*, 2:65.

28. *Meng Ta pei lu* 2b (in Wang, ed., *Meng-ku shih-liao*); Krader, "Origin of the State," 227; Michael Prawdin, *The Mongol Empire: Its Rise and Legacy* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1952), 43.

29. Wada Sei, *Taashi kenkyū—Manshu hen* (Tokyo: Tōyō Bunko, 1955), 603-12.

30. *Han shu* 94a.3751. By the third century A.D., the Tu-ku clan produced the royal line of Hsiung-nu Shan-yü (Chin shu 97.2550).

31. See n. 27 above.

32. Fletcher, "The Mongols," 19. On this lineage see Igor de Rachewiltz, tr., "The Secret History of the Mongols," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 5-18 (1971-84), commentary on par. 42; Paul Ratchnevsky, *Činggis-khan: sein Leben und Wirken*, Münchener Ostasiatische Studien Bd. 32 (Munich: F. Steiner Verlag, 1983), 13, n. 56; Paul Pelliot and Louis Hambis, eds. and trs., *Histoire des campagnes de Gengis Khan*, Tome I (Leiden: Brill, 1951), 118-20; and Sechin Jagchid and Paul Hyer, *Mongolia's Culture and Society* (Folkstone, England: Dawson, 1979), 247.

33. Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 37-41; and Herbert Franke, *From Tribal Chieftain to Universal Emperor and God: The Legitimation of the Yüan Dynasty* (Munich: Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1978), 22-24.

34. Fletcher, "The Mongols," 30. Nibley, "The Hierocentric State," should be consulted for confirmation of Fletcher's hypothesis. For Chinese and Christian contributions to the concept of universal empire, see Berthold Spuler, *The Muslim World, Part II: The Mongol Period*, tr. F. R. C. Bagley (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 5; and H. Franke, *From Tribal Chieftain to Universal Emperor*, 18. For references to modern scholarship on the nomadic belief in Tenggeri see Fletcher, "The Mongols," 31, n. 13; and for this ancient name (Tenggeri), see Sir Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 523b-24a.

35. See Hsieh Chien, "Hsiung-nu tsung-chiao hsin-yang chi ch'i liu-pien," *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology* 42/4 (1971): 571-614, for the Hsiung-nu religion. *Han shu* 94a.3751 indicates the Hsiung-nu borrowing of the Chinese title "Son of Heaven." For another Chinese influence on the title of the Hsiung-nu see David B. Honey, "Sinification and Legitimation: Liu Yüan, Shih Le, and the Founding of Han and Chao," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1988, 43-44, n. 26.

36. Khazanov, *Nomads*, 239, n. 2.

37. Tekin, *Orkhon Turkic*, 261-62, 265-66. Cf. Mori Masao, "The T'u-chüeh Concept of Heaven," *Acta Asiatica* 24 (1981): 55.

38. Quoted in V. A. Riasanovsky, *Fundamental Principles of Mongolian Law* (Tientsin, 1937), 89. Compare the prayer recorded in de Rachewiltz, "Secret History," 103; and John Andrew Boyle, *The History of the World Conqueror by 'Ala-ad-Din 'Ata-Malik Juvaini*, 2 vols. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), 1:80-81.

39. Robert P. Blake and Richard N. Frye, "History of the Nation of Archers (the Mongols), By Grigor of Akanc'," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 12 (1949): 333 (11:5-14).

40. Blake and Frye, "History of the Nation," 301 (4:40). On the *yasa* of Chinggis, see Boyle, *History of the World Conqueror*, 1:23-26; Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, 25; and Riasanovsky, *Mongolian Law*, 25-35 for discussion, and 83-86 for a collation of thirty-six extant articles from the code.

41. Cf. de Rachewiltz, "Secret History," 121. The "Secret History" is full of references to the power of heaven as aiding Chinggis or his lineage; as a sampling, consult paragraphs 80, 187, 199, 201, 203, 206, 208, 224, 240, 256, 267, and 275.

42. Riasanovsky, *Mongolian Law*, 27-28; Fletcher, "The Mongols," 31; and Franke, *From Tribal Chieftain to Universal Emperor*, 15-16.

43. On the political aims of the Mongols consult Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, 43-44. On the Mongol letters demanding submission, see E. Voeglin, "The Mongol Orders of Submission to European Powers 1245-1255," *Byzantion* 15 (1940-41): 378-413. For the place of heaven's will in the ideology of the Mongols and as a motivation for conquest, see Igor de Rachewiltz, "Some Remarks on the Ideological Foundation of Chingis Khan's Empire," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 7 (1973): 21-36; Fletcher, "The Mongols," 30-31, 34; and Franke, *From Tribal Chieftain to Universal Emperor*, 14-18. For heaven as the same motivating factor in the Ch'i-tan goal of world conquest, see Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese Society*, 112. For general background consult Nibley, "Hierocentric State," 244-47.

44. Juvaini did ascribe the invasion and investment of Islamic civilization to divine will. On this consult Boyle, *History of the World Conqueror*, 1:xxxiii, xxxv; and Juvaini's expressions in *ibid.*, 1:23-24, 39, and 144. Juvaini, of course, was not the only Islamic apologist to voice these sentiments. See, *inter alia*, the *Zij-i-Ilkhani* of Nasir-ad-Din Tusi, cited in Boyle, *The Mongol World Empire 1206-1370* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1977), 27:245-46. Cf. also Constantin D'Ohsson, *Histoire des Mongols, depuis Tchinguiz-Khan jusqu'à Timour Bey, ou Tamerlan*, 4 vols. (Le Haye et Amsterdam: Les Frères Van Cleef, 1834-35), 1:392-93.

45. Manabu Waida, "Notes on Sacred Kingship in Central Asia," *Numen* 23 (1976): 179-90; 181. The Mongols also included trees as part of their shamanistic rites of kingship; see Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, 3 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie National, 1959-73), 2:627-37.

46. See the discussion in Fletcher, "The Mongols," 18, 34-35.

47. On Chinggis as shaman, the *Tabaqāt-i Nāsiri* of Jūzjanī Minhāj al-Dīn records, "Every now and again he used to fall into a trance . . . and that state of trance used to be similar to that which had happened to him at the outset of his rise" (quoted in Boyle, *Mongol World Empire*, 22:181); cf. William of Rubruck, *The Journey of William of Rubruck*, 121. The fundamental study on Chinggis as shaman remains Iwai Hirosato, "Chingisu Kan no sokui to fugeki ni tsuite," in *Tōyōshi ronsō* (Kyoto: Tōyōshi Kenkyūkai, 1950), 107-30. For the cult of Chinggis, see N. Pallisen, "Die alte Religion der Mongolen unter der Kultus Tchingis-Chans," *Numen* 3 (1956): 178-229; and Sechin Jagchid, *Essays in Mongolian Studies*, Monograph 3 (Provo: David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies, Brigham Young University, 1988), 299-321; cf. also Tsy Zamtsarono,

"Kul't Chingisa v Ordose iz puteshestvia v iuzhnuiv Mongoliiv v 1919," *Central Asiatic Journal* 6 (1961): 194-234.

48. On the "shamanistic structure" of kingship in Inner Asia, see Manabu, "Sacred Kingship," and Iwai Hirosato, "Chingisu Kan no sokui."

49. Franke, *From Tribal Chieftain to Universal Emperor*, 7.

50. In China, acculturation translates into the process of sinification. For an analysis and historical survey of this process, see Honey, "Sinification and Legitimation," chap. 3. For a parallel process, see Speros Vryonis, Jr., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

51. Fletcher, "The Mongols," 21, 22; cf. Douglas L. Johnson, *The Nature of Nomadism*, Department of Geography Research Paper No. 118 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1969), 13. The same is true of modern autocracies; see, for instance, Andrew E. Janos, "Charismatics and Constitutions: The Politics of Succession in Non-Western Societies," *Journal of International and Area Studies* 1 (1986): 115-33.

52. For other primary sources on the rise of Chinggis more concise than the "Secret History," see *Meng Ta pei lu* 3a-b (in Wang, ed., *Meng-ku shih-liao*); Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, 5:18-22; Polo, *Description of the World*, par. 65-66 (pp. 162-65); and Boyle, *History of the World Conqueror*, 1:34-39.

53. Tekin, *Orkhon Turkic*, 265. The seventeen original men of Ilteriš, it should be pointed out, possibly played the role of a personal retinue of a leader. Sometimes they became *anda* or sworn brothers, which custom, according to Owen Lattimore, extended the principle of blood kinship among these adopted brethren and hence strengthened their bonds of loyalty; Owen Lattimore, *Studies in Frontier History, Collected Papers 1929-58* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 533. On this personal following of chiefs and aspirants for supratribal office, see Vladimirtsov, *Le régime social des Mongols*, 95ff; Beatrice F. Manz, "The Ulus Chagatay before and after Temur's Rise to Power: The Transformation from Tribal Confederation to Army of Conquest," *Central Asiatic Journal* 27 (1983): 88; and Fletcher, "The Mongols," 20.

54. Fletcher, "The Mongols," 14.

55. Oral epics constituted the chief means of preservation and transmittal of traditional lore among the nomads as well as the primary sources for sedentary historians. For instance, both Hsiung-nu and Hsien-pi epics were incorporated into Chinese historical accounts, with expected retouching (Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian*

Frontiers of China [New York: Capitol Publishing and American Geographical Society, 1951], 464-65; and K. H. J. Gardiner and R. R. C. de Crespigny, "T'an-Shih Huai and the Hsien-pi Tribes of the Second Century," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 15 [1977]: 14). For an evaluation of traditional Turkish epics, see Nora K. Chadwick and Victor Zhirmunsky, *Oral Epics of Central Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), esp. 79-95, for "individualism" in the heroic poems; and Faruk Sümer et al., *The Book of Dede Korkut: A Turkish Epic* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972). A very complete introduction to Mongolian heroic epics, including an extensive bibliography, is Walther Heissig, *Die mongolischen Heldenepen – Struktur und Motiv*, Reinisch-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vorträge G 237 (Düsseldorf: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1978). For the six traditional theories on what set the nomadic empires, particularly the Mongols, in motion, see Fletcher, "The Mongols," 32-39; and Uchida Gimpu, *Hokku Ajiashi Kenkyū*, 2 vols. (Kyoto: Dobosha, 1975), 1:1-27, with emphasis on the Hsiung-nu.

56. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, 78.

57. Fletcher, "The Mongols," 29-30; the ideological device was the belief in Tenggeri.

58. On this point see Fletcher, "The Mongols," 28.

59. As two prominent examples, wars of succession were responsible for splitting both the Hsiung-nu empire (into northern and southern halves ca. 55 B.C.) and T'u-chüeh (into eastern and western sections ca. A.D. 582). Theophylactus Simocatta, *History* VII, 8, 8-10, records a typical attempt at a coup among the Avars. Jack Goody, ed., *Succession to High Office* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 5, includes such a partitioning of territory and duplication of the supreme office among the possible solutions to the problem of succession.

60. Fletcher, "The Mongols," 17.

61. Uchida Gimpu, *Kyodo-shi kenkyū* (Kyoto: Sogensha, 1953), 12, 14.

62. The split into northern and southern halves has been discussed in McGovern, *The Early Empires of Central Asia*, 169-70; and H. H. Dubs, *History of the Former Han Dynasty*, 3 vols. (Baltimore: Waverly Press, 1933-55), 2:190-96. See further Lin Kan, *Hsiung-nu shih*, rev. ed. (Huhhot: Inner Mongolia People's Publishing House, 1979), 100-119; and Uchida, *Hokku Ajiashi kenkyū*, 2:210-19.

63. According to the medieval commentator Hu San-hsing, cited in *Hou Han shu chi chieh* (reprinted Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1984), 89.3a.

64. Treated by McGovern, *Early Empires of Central Asia*, 169-71; Honey, "Sinification and Legitimation," 18-22, recounts the decline of the office of Shan-yü among the Southern Hsiung-nu until A.D.216.

65. *Sui shu* 84.1865; Liu, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten*, 1:43. The same incident, with minor variants, is recorded in *Pei shih* 99.3290; tr. Uchida et al., *Kiba minzoku shi*, 2:74-75.

66. Among the first eight T'u-chüeh rulers (until the split into eastern and western hordes), succession passed from father to son three times, from brother to younger brother twice, and once from granduncle to grandnephew (according to the Chinese accounts). Among the eighth/ninth-century Uighurs, primogenital succession was preferred; Colin Mackerass, *The Uighur Empire According to the T'ang Dynastic Histories* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 192-93.

67. For the interplay of birthright versus tanistry among another group of nomads, the Hsien-pi, consult T'ang Ch'ang-ju, *Wei Chin Nan-pei Ch'ao shih lun-ts'ung hsü-pien* (1959; reprinted Beijing: Sanlien shu-tien, 1978), 138.

68. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, 218-19, n. 4; Polo, *Description of the World*, par. 65 (162). Plano Carpini stated that formal election by the *quriltai* was written into the *yasa* by Chinggis (Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, 25).

69. There is little concrete evidence that earlier nomads had formal assemblies like the Mongolian *quriltai* other than passing references such as "they unitedly set him up" and the like.

70. On this famous occasion, consult the following: Ratchnevsky, *Činggis-khan*, 82-87; Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, 1:295-96; René Grousset, *Conqueror of the World*, tr. Marian McKellar and Denis Sinor (New York: Orion Press, 1966), 166-70; and B. Ya. Vladimirtsov, *The Life of Chingis Khan*, tr. Prince D. S. Mirsky (1930; reprinted New York and London: Benjamin Blom, 1969), 63-66.

71. Plano Carpini, in Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, 61-64; and summarized in Spuler, *The Mongol Period*, 15.

72. Martin, *Rise of Chingis Khan*, 314. In the case of the *quriltai* convened to name Chinggis' successor, it had no choice but to confirm the heir he had already chosen before his death, his third son Ögödei. For the succession to Chinggis, see the extended discussion in D'Ohsson, *Histoire des Mongols*, 2:8-13; cf. Vladimirtsov, *Life of Chingis Khan*, 149-51; and Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, 18-19, 37-38, 46.