HOK-LAM CHAN

Siting by Bowshot: A Mongolian Custom and Its Sociopolitical and Cultural Implications

INTRODUCTION

In ancient times, Chinese world views were largely shaped by theories of *yin-yang* 陰陽 correlation despite the predominance of Confucian ethical and philosophical systems in society. People believed that a vast cosmic energy, or force, imbued heaven and earth through the cyclic permutations of the Five Agents — wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. They also believed that a harmonious confluence of these agents, perceivable in the forms and configurations of the land, produced good fortune. These beliefs fit easily within China's agrarian environment, as well as its sociopolitical hierarchies, and thus lasted for many centuries.

This kind of "astro-ecological" mode of thought, as it has recently been termed, evolved into a well-known branch of Chinese applied cosmology and divination popularly known to the West as "geomancy." The word geomancy, however, is convoluted, since the Chinese concept ranges terminologically from *ti-li* 地理 (land pattern) to the more common *k'an-yü* 堪輿 (exploring the ground) and *feng-shui* 風水 (wind and water). As suggested, it should be more appropriately rendered as astro-ecology, or as topographical siting in reference to specific applications. Chinese literature, both the classical and popular, is replete with explanations and illustrated techniques for locating auspicious terrestrial sites that underlie the favorable confluences of cosmic energy. Traditionally, the specialist practitioners in the craft of siting were known as *ti-shih* 地師, *k'an-yü*, or *feng-shui hsien-sheng* 先生. They had the knack of identifying the auspicious pit or locale for interring the dead, building a house, and designing a community settlement or a populous walled city.[1]

---

[1] For a discussion of geomancy and an extensive bibliography, see Andrew March, "An Appreciation of Chinese Geomancy," *JAS* 27.2 (1968) pp. 253–67, and Steven Bennett, "Patterns of the Sky and Earth: A Chinese Science of Applied Cosmology," *Chinese Science* 3 (1978), pp. 27–38. Previous treatments are J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1892–1910) 3, and Joseph Needham et al., *Science and Civilisation in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1954, 1959) 2–3, relevant sections. For a discussion of the role of geomancy in the craft of siting Chinese walled cities, see in particular Sophie Clément et al., *Architecture du paysage en Asie orientale* (Paris: L'Institut Francais d'Architec-

Whereas the Han Chinese were steeped in sedentary habits and an agricultural economy that produced extraordinary material comforts, the Mongols were pastoral nomads with no fixed abode. They endured hardship in constant struggles against nature and hostile nomadic rivals. Chinese techniques for the topographical and architectural siting of houses and burial grounds were, as mentioned, a product of an agrarian, astro-ecological consciousness. It might be useful, therefore, to ask what the Mongols did in comparable situations, given their diametrically different world view and cultural values.

Modern studies, drawing on Mongolian manuscripts dealing with astrology and divination, have shown that the Mongols who were under Chinese influence also practised geomancy. Evidence indicates that divination based on terrestrial color and shape was widely spread among the people. Mongols believed that local currents influenced the atmosphere of a certain spot, so that the site of a newly erected house, or that of a grave, must harmonize with these currents to avoid injury or harmful effects on the inhabitants or the descendants of the dead. Favorably situated houses, temples, and graves would increase the wealth, health, and happiness of residents. In all these cases, the forms and colors of mountains and fields, the direction of rivers, and the roads had to be taken into consideration, very much like the Chinese art of geomancy.[2]

Mongol indulgence in geomancy, however, was a late developement, coming after the nomadic tribesmen had undergone centuries of interaction with the Chinese people. It evidently had not existed at the time of the rise of Chinggis Qan. An inquiry into the pristine beliefs of Mongol tribesmen should therefore focus on their autonomous life-style, which included fishing, hunting and stockbreeding, and military skill in combat horsemanship and archery. This leads to the subject of the present study—shooting arrows as a method of topographical and architectural siting. Like many other nomadic and seminomadic peoples in premodern Eurasia, for Mongols, arrows and bows played an indispensible daily role both during

---

ture, 1982), and Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning* (Honolulu: U. of Hawaii P., 1990).

[2] Scholars have used manuscripts on astrology and divination preserved in European archives to study geomantic divination of the Mongols under Chinese influence. See C. R. Bawden, "Supernatural Element in Sickness and Death According to the Mongol Tradition," *AM* NS 8.2 (1961), pp. 215–75, and part 2 in ibid. 9.2 (1962), pp. 153–78; J. R. Krueger, "The *Altan Saba* (The Golden Vessel): A Mongolian Lamaist Burial Manual," *MS* 26 (1965), pp. 207–72; and Alice Sárközi, "A Mongol Manual of Divination by Means of Characteristics of the Land," in *Tractata Altaica: Denis Sinor sexagenario optime de rebus altaicis merito dedicata* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1976), pp. 583–604.

peace and war. Their custom of shooting arrows for siting had significant sociopolitical and cultural implications.

A frequently cited article on arrows and oaths among the Mongols by the late Reverend Henry Serruys perceptively observed that besides employing them as instruments of war, the Mongols had used arrows as tallies, or proofs, of personal authenticity:

> During the Ming period, indeed, the Mongols employed arrows as credentials for their envoys going to the Chinese in the south; messengers sent to subject clans or tribes in order to convoke their warriors also carried arrows as proof of the authenticity of their mission; when making an agreement with somebody, a Mongol chieftain sometimes left an arrow in the hands of the other contracting party, usually a Chinese official, as a sign of the given promise; or an arrow could be broken in two in a symbolic action accompanying an oath or a solemn promise; arrows stuck into the ground had the same meaning, and finally arrows were sometimes stuck into an object or hung on it to indicate the act of taking possession of that object.[3]

The above examples come mainly from the Ming period, that is, the late-fourteenth to seventeenth centuries, but they are equally valid for earlier periods. What Serruys missed, however, is that the Mongols also had been habitually engaged in shooting arrows to choose auspicious sites, and had been doing so in contexts similar to those of geomancy: establishing a fief, building a monument, and even determining the location of a walled city. The Mongols practised this technique long before they were exposed to Chinese influence. The following episodes, drawn from Yüan sources as well as modern Mongolian and Chinese folktales, shed significant light on the society, politics, and culture of two interrelated civilizations.

CHINGGIS QAN'S SCHEME FOR REWARDING COMRADES

The first episode of the Mongolian custom of shooting arrows to choose a site is found in the biography of the Central Asian Muslim Jabar Qoje (Cha-pa-erh Huo-che 札八兒火者, or Jaʿfar Khwājah) contained in *Yüan-*

---

[3] Henry Serruys, "A Note on Arrows and Oaths Among the Mongols," *JAOS* 78.4 (1958), p. 279. Other information on arrows is in K. U. Kohalmi, "Über die pfeifenden Pfeile der innerasiatischen Reiternomaden," and idem, "Der Pfeil bei den innerasiatischen Reiternomaden und ihren Nachbarn," *AOASH* 3 (1953), pp. 45–72, and ibid. 6 (1956), pp. 109–62.

shih 元史 (*The Official History of the Yüan*). A chieftain of Arab stock, Jabar Qoje joined the retinue of Temüjin, the future Chinggis Qan (1167–1227), during the latter's struggle for hegemony. Jabar was involved in the disastrous battle against Öng Qan of the Kereit tribe in 1203 that Temüjin managed to survive. Jabar was one of his nineteen loyal followers who sought refuge at Lake Baljuna and swore fidelity by ceremonially drinking the waters. The Baljuna covenant was the most significant prelude to Temüjin's elevation to universal qanship at a *quriltai* at Kerülen River in 1206.[4]

According to *Chin-shih* 金史 (*The Official History of the Chin*), having launched his invasion against the Chin state early in 1211, Chinggis Qan twice in the fall sent Jabar Qoje as an *elchi* (*i-li-chih* 乙里只; a messenger) to its capital Chung-tu 中都 (literally, Central Metropolis; modern Peking) to learn the intention of the Chin emperor Yung-chi 永濟 (Prince Wei-shao 衛紹; r. 1209–1213). In August 1213, as the Mongols were gaining the upper hand, Chinggis intensified the offensives against the Chin capital, but they were held back by the strong fortifications erected at Chü-yung kuan 居庸關, the mountain pass to the north. Because he was a skilled tactican familiar with the defense of Chung-tu, Jabar proposed to skirt the enemy's main fortifications for a surprise storming of Tzu-ching k'ou 紫荊口, which was to the southwest through a narrow mountainous path. The strategy worked, and the Mongol forces seized Chü-yung kuan a month later, consequently threatening the Chin capital.[5]

---

[4] There are several biographical accounts of Jabar Qoje in Chinese, Mongolian, and Persian sources. Of primary importance is T'o-t'o 脫脫 et al., eds., *Yüan-shih* 元史 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1976; hereafter, *YS*) 120, p. 2960. Other Chinese sources are Wang Te-i 王德毅 et al., eds., *Yüan-jen chuan-chi tzu-liao so-yin* 元人傳記資料索引 (Taipei: Hsin-wen-feng ch'u-pan kung-ssu, 1982) 4, p. 2409. On his participation in the Baljuna covenant, see Francis W. Cleaves, "The Historicity of the Baljuna Covenant," *HJAS* 18.3–4 (1955), pp. 376–77, 396–97. In Persian sources his name is transcribed as Ja'far Khwâjah. See Minhaj al-Din Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i nasiri*, trans. H. G. Raverty (New Delhi: Oriental Books Rpt. Corp., 1970) 2, p. 954; cf. Thomas Allsen, "Mongolian Princes and Their Merchant Partners," *AM* 3d ser. 2.2 (1989), p. 87. Jabar Qoje, however, is given a biography under the name A-la-ch'ien 阿剌淺 in T'u Chi 屠寄, *Meng-wu-erh shih-chi* 蒙兀兒史記 (1934 edn.) 46, p. 1a, and K'o Shao-min 柯劭忞, *Hsin Yüan-shih* 新元史 (1922 edn.) 131, p. 1a. This is because these two authors confused him with A-la-chi'en (Arasen, or Arajan) in *The Secret History of the Mongols*, sect. 280, and A-li-hsien 阿里鮮 in Ch'iu Ch'u-chi 丘處機, *Chang-ch'un chen-jen Hsi-yu chi* 長春眞人西遊記. (For discussion of the proper transcription of A-li-ch'ien, see Igor de Rachewiltz, trans., "*The Secret History of the Mongols*, Chapter Twelve," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 31 [1985], pp. 84–85. De Rachewiltz suspects that A-li-hsien is the transcription of a Tangut name.) This historiographical confusion has been rectified by Yang Chih-chiu 楊志玖, "Hsin Yüan-shih A-la-ch'ien chuan cheng-wu" 傳證誤, rpt. in idem, *Yüan-shih san-lun* 元史三論 (Peking: Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1985), pp. 163–75; see also idem, "Yüan-shih Cha-pa-erh Huo-che chuan i-wen cheng-pu" 元史札八兒火者傳譯文證補, *Ta-lu tsa-chih* 大陸雜誌 82.2 (1991), pp. 32–34.

[5] On Jabar Qoje's initial mission to the Chin court of Emperor Yung-chi, see T'o-t'o et al.,

Just then, the Chin emperor was slain in a palace coup, and a successor, known as Hsüan-tsung 宣宗 (r. 1213–1224), was installed. At this juncture, Chinggis tried to prevail through diplomacy, and Jabar was again dispatched in March and April 1214 to Chung-tu in an attempt to persuade the new emperor to submit; but the offer was twice rebuffed. Then in June, as the Mongols resumed offensives, the Chin emperor feared the fate of the capital and fled with a retinue that included senior officials to the Southern Capital of Pien 汴 (modern Kaifeng, Honan). Chung-tu surrendered in May 1215. After entering Chung-tu and rewarding the meritorious generals, Chinggis left Jabar Qoje and others to administer the fallen Chin capital and appointed him chief *darughachi*, that is, an imperial representive and governor over lands north of the Yellow River and south of T'ieh-men 鐵門 (namely, Chü-yung kuan).[6]

Jabar Qoje's subsequent career is vividly retold in the following account in his *Yüan-shih* biography. It describes his obtaining Chinggis's favor and receiving a fief in Chung-tu by shooting arrows in four directions from a spot indicated by Chinggis. The passage reads:

> After the Mongol armies had taken the [Tzu-ching] pass, Chung-tu was greatly shaken. Then the Chin people moved [the seat of government] to Pien. [Following his entry,] T'ai-tsu (Chinggis) inspected the topography of the mountain and stream of Chung-tu; he turned to his close attendant and said: "That I could arrive here [is because] Cha-pa-erh's merit is the greatest." He then spoke to Cha-pa-erh, "Why don't you draw your bow and shoot; I shall award you all the land within the perimeter of the fallen arrows." Chinggis then returned north in a carriage, leaving Cha-pa-erh and other generals to administer Chung-tu.[7]

---

eds., *Chin-shih* 金史 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1975; hereafter, *CS*) 14, p. 303. Here the two entries mention only the visit of a Mongol *elchi*, without including Jabar's name. However, according to his *YS* biography, there is no doubt that he was the messenger. On Jabar's strategy to invade Chung-tu, see *YS* 120, p. 2968. For details, see Li Tse-fen 李則芬, *Yüan-shih hsin-chiang* 元史新講 (Taipei: Chung-hua, 1978) 1, p. 428.

[6] Jabar Qoje's mission to the Chin capital to persuade Emperor Hsüan-tsung to submit is mentioned in *CS* 14, p. 304, where he is identified as *elchi* Cha-pa 札八. On the Chin emperor's flight from Chung-tu to Pien, see *CS* 14, pp. 304 ff; Li Yu-t'ang 李有棠, *Chin-shih chi-shih pen-mo* 金史紀事本末 (1903 edn.), ch. 40. For details of the Mongol offensives against the Chin, see Sun K'o-k'uan 孫克寬, *Yüan-tai Han wen-hua chih huo-tung* 元代漢文化之活動 (Taipei: T'ai-wan Chung-hua, 1968), pp. 42–54, and Li, *Yüan shih hsin-chiang* 1, pp. 435–58.

[7] *YS* 120, p. 2960. This case is cited in Ch'en Kao-hua 陳高華, *Yüan Ta-tu* 元大都 (Peking: Pei-ching ch'u-pan she, 1982), p. 26, and also in Hung Chin-fu 洪金富, "Ts'ung t'ou-hsia fen-feng chih-tu k'an Yüan-ch'ao ti hsing-chih" 從投下分封制度看元朝的性

The location of Jabar Qoje's estate in Chung-tu is not indicated, but the episode suggests that the Mongolian steppe custom of choosing a site by arrow shooting now came to be applied in a sedentary urban environment. This custom was practised not just among the Mongols themselves, but was also extended to the Central Asians in Chinggis Qan's service, indicating that it may readily have been passed on just as well to the non-Han followers of the Mongol qan.

Following the capture of Chung-tu, Chinggis extended a similar privilege of enfeoffment to his favorite lieutenant Chinqai (Chen-hai 鎮海; d. 1252). Chinqai, whose ethnic origin has been a controversy among modern historians, was either a Kereit Mongol, a Turkish-speaking Uighur, or a Kereit Önggüt, varying according to sources. A member of the literary Mongolian or Turkish elite, but also a warrior, Chinqai joined Chinggis before the latter's claim to universal qanship in 1206. The sources indicate unequivocally that Chinqai was a Nestorian Christian, but in his *Yüan-shih* biography, his name is prefixed by the Chinese surname T'ien 田 (literally, field). It has been suggested that this new surname may have originated with a Chinese account that credited him with organizing, on Chinggis's instruction, a garrison depot between 1212 and 1220. This unit would have been similar to the traditional "colony farms" (t'un-t'ien 屯田) already extant in western Mongolia. The depot was situated between the Khangai 金山 and Altai 阿爾山 mountains, and became known as Chinqai Balqasun, or Chen-hai ch'eng 鎮海城, literally, "City of Chinqai," or more correctly, the "Granary of Chinqai."[8]

Chinqai probably began his career as a merchant spy of Chinggis; some sources identify him, along with Jabar Qoje, as one of the stalwarts of the Baljuna covenant. The biographies give only a sketchy account of Chinqai's distinguished campaigns under Temüjin, and after assuming the universal qanship, Chinggis named Chinqai to the post of *jarquchi* (judge or arbitrator), one of the most important appointments in the Mongol administration of the conquered territories. Thereupon, Chinqai continued his service either in the civil administration or in military campaigns. He is known to have taken part against the uprising of Juyin and Önggüt elements in 1207, in Central Asia in about 1210 against the Naiman émigré Güchülük, in Manchuria and China against Khitans and Jurchens, and in Muslim Turkestan.[9]

Beginning in 1211, Chinqai took an active part in the offensives against the Jurchen Chin capital of Chung-tu. After the fall of the capital in the summer of 1215 he was handsomely rewarded. His *Yüan-shih* biography reads:

> In the year *jen-shen* 壬申 (1212) [Chinqai] executed the plan of the Grand Progenitor (T'ai-tsu, that is, Chinggis Qan) to conquer the Han Chinese territories. When his army arrived at Lung-hsing 龍興, they fought a battle with the [forces of the] Chin general Hu-ch'a-hu 忽察虎 (Hu-sha-hu 胡沙虎, or Ho-shih-lieh Chih-chung 紇石烈執中; d. 1213). Chinqai was struck by an arrow in his breast; he bandaged his wounds and returned to combat four times. The morale of the soldiers was boosted. After the fall of Yen 燕 (Chung-tu), T'ai-tsu instructed him to shoot four arrows around the perimeter of the walled city, and awarded him all the orchards, ponds, and lodging houses within the confines of the fallen arrows. Before long, he was elevated to be a prime minister of the right in the Central Secretariat.[10]

It is clear that in awarding land and property to Chinqai, Chinggis followed the same Mongolian custom as he had for Jabar Qoje. The pattern was presumably well established; and Chinggis may have made similar grants in the former Chin capital to other generals, but no other cases are recorded.

The *Yüan-shih* text gives no clue to the location of Chinqai's estate, but such information exists in his "spirit-way epitaph," which was written by the Han-lin academician Hsü Yu-jen 許有壬 (1287–1364) and which became the basis of the official biography. According to this information, Chinqai shot the arrows on top of the Ta-pei ko 大悲閣 (Great Compassion Pavilion) in the Chin capital. The Ta-pei ko, originally part of a Buddhist monastery built in the T'ang, was renovated during the K'ai-t'ai 開泰 era

---

賀, *CYYY* 58.4 (1987), p. 851.

[8] There are conflicting biographical accounts of Chinqai in Chinese, Latin, and Persian sources. The biography in *YS* 120, p. 2963, is based on his spirit-way epitaph ("Ch'ieh-lieh kung shen-tao-pei ming" 怯烈公神道碑銘) written by Hsü Yu-jen 許有壬, included in *Kuei-t'ang hsiao-kao* 圭塘小藁, SKCS *chen-pen*, 2d ser. (Taipei: T'aiwan Shang-wu, 1971) 10, pp. 6b–8b. For other sources, see Wang, *Yüan-jen chuan-chi* 4, p. 2418, and Igor de Rachewiltz and May Wang, eds., *Repertory of Proper Names in Yüan Literary Sources* (Taipei: Southern Materials Center, 1988) 1, p. 257. On the Latin and Persian sources, see Erich Haenisch et al., *Meng-ta pei-lu und Hei-ta shih-lüeh: Chinesische Gesandtenberichte über die Frühen Mongolen 1221 und 1237* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1980), pp. 93–96. On Chinqai's participation in the Baljuna covenant, see Cleaves, "Baljuna Covenant," pp. 397–98, 407–9. For a recent attempt to unravel Chinqai's ethnicity, see Ting Kuo-fan 丁國範, "Chen-hai tsu-yüan pien" 鎮海族源辨, *Yüan-shih chi pei-fang min-tsu shih yen-chiu chi-k'an* 元史及北方民族史研究集刊 10 (July 1986), pp. 43–47. On Chinqai's successful *t'un-t'ien* program in western Mongolia, see Hsü Chih-ch'ing 徐志清, "Shih-lun Chen-hai t'un-t'ien" 試論鎮海屯田, *Chi-nan hsüeh-pao* 暨南學報 4 (1987), pp. 59–62.

[9] *YS* 120, pp. 2963–64. For his participation at the Baljuna covenant, see Cleaves, "Baljuna Covenant," pp. 376–77, 396–97.

[10] *YS* 120, p. 2964. Cf. Ch'en, *Yüan Ta-tu*, p. 27; Hung, "T'ou-hsia," p. 851. For details, see n. 11.

(1012–1020) of the Liao emperor Sheng-tsung 聖宗 (r. 989–1031), who later renamed it Sheng-en Monastery 聖恩寺. It was rebuilt under the Chin emperor Hsi-tsung 熙宗 (r. 1135–1149) in 1149. Recent scholarship has determined that it was situated in the northeast corner of Chung-tu, about one *li* (approximately 500 meters) north of the ruined Chi men 薊門, one of the western gates of the T'ang-era walled city Yu-chou 幽州. It became a relic in the old marketplace of the "Southern City" (Nan-ch'eng 南城) of the Yüan capital Ta-tu 大都 (Great Metropolis; roughly modern Peking), which was built between 1266 and 1283 on the site of the former Chin summer palace northeast of Chung-tu. Because Ta-pei ko was the epicenter of the bowshots, Chinqai's estate must have lain within the area of the old Buddhist monastery, and its present location can be identified.[11]

A basic question remains: can we know the distance of a bowshot so as to deduce the perimeter of these fiefs? The information is scant but tenable. A poetic passage in *The Secret History of the Mongols* (section 195) extols the feat of an extraordinary archer, Jochi-Qasar, the eldest of Chinggis Qan's younger brothers. "When he shoots, drawing his bow to the full, he shoots a distance of 900 *alda*. When he shoots, drawing his bow only a little, he shoots a distance of 500 *alda*." The Mongolian word *alda*, rendered as *pu* 步 (pace) in Chinese, means a fathom, and it corresponds to 5 *ch'ih* 尺 (*toqoi*, foot) or 1.6 meters. Therefore, the distance of these bowshots is 1,440 and 800 meters, respectively. However, this record is not in any way achievable by normal archery. Qasar in fact is given superhuman qualities in the text.[12]

---

[11] Hsü, "Ch'ieh-lieh kung shen-tao-pei ming," in *Kuei-t'ang hsiao-kao* 10, p. 8a. For a brief history of the Ta-pei ko and its location, see Hsiung Meng-hsiang 熊夢祥, comp., *Hsi-chin chih*, the Yüan gazetteer of Ta-tu recently retrieved. See Textual Reconstruction Committee, ed., *Hsin-chin chih chi-i* 輯佚 (Peking: Pei-ching ku-chih, 1982), pp. 68, 113, 117. Cf. Miao Ch'üan-sun 繆荃孫, ed., *Shun-t'ien fu chih* 順天府志 (Peking: Pei-ching ta-hsüeh, 1983), pp. 42, 65. For additional information, see Yü Chieh 于傑 and Yü Kuang-tu 于光度, *Chin Chung-tu* 金中都 (Peking: Pei-ching, 1989), pp. 32, 33. The authors have located the site of Sheng-en Monastery east of the Kan-shih Bridge 甘石橋 in the Kuang-wai ta-chieh 廣外大街 outside of Kuang-an Gate 廣安門 in present-day Peking. It is shown at the northwest corner of Chung-tu on the sketch-map frontispiece of *Chin Chung-tu*. The historical atlas of Peking produced by Hou Jen-chih 侯仁之 et al., eds., *Pei-ching li-shih ti-t'u chi* 北京歷史地圖集 (Peking: Pei-ching, 1985), p. 24, however, erroneously places the monastery within the Hsien-lu district 仙露坊 at the northeast corner of Chung-tu.

[12] For the translation and commentary on the story of Jochi-Qasar in *The Secret History*, see Igor de Rachewiltz, "*The Secret History of the Mongols*, Chapter Seven," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 18 (1978), pp. 55, 75. The Mongolian word *alda* (English: fathom; French: brasse) originally referred to the distance between the tips of the middle fingers of a man's outstretched arms. As a measure of length, it contains 5 *toqoi* (Chinese: *ch'ih*), equal to 1.6 meters. (This is based on the present-day value of the *alda*, which probably goes back to the Manchu period). See Ferdinand D. Lessing et al., eds., *Mongolian-English Dictionary* (Berkeley: U. of California P., 1960), pp. 29, 829. For a detailed discussion of *alda*, see Françoise Aubin, "Les

Information of a more credible sort comes from the *Hei-ta shih-lüeh* 黑韃事略, a composite reminiscence of P'eng Ta-ya 彭大雅 and Hsü T'ing 徐霆, two Sung-dynasty envoys to the court of Ögödei Qaghan (r. 1229–1241) at Qara Qorum in 1232 and 1235, respectively. Also in this category is the famous commemorative monument in honor of Jochi-Qasar's son Yisüngge (ca. 1190–1270), commonly but improperly known as the "Stone of Chinggis" dated to sometime between 1225 and 1270. Hsü T'ing reports witnessing Ögödei shoot an arrow outside his camp to a distance of 200 *pu*, which by the above formula would be 320 meters. The "Stone of Chinggis," a granite stele inscribed with a five-line text in Uighur-Mongol script, honored Yisüngge's archery feat after the great qan's campaign against Khwārazm. It states that Yisüungge shot an arrow to 335 *alda*, or 536 meters, an extraordinary but feasible accomplishment.[13]

On the basis of these accounts, it appears that a powerful Mongolian archer would have been able to launch an arrow roughly 300 to 500 meters, depending on the direction and velocity of the wind. The average area of the land grants of these Mongol generals, determined by the distance of arrows launched in four directions, therefore, would be beween 360,000 and a million square meters (or 0.36 and 1 square kilometer). This means that there was a more or less uniform size of appanages, with variation due to archery skill and natural forces.

These Mongol generals described above were not the only ones awarded a fief for loyalty and military exploits. After initial success against the Chin, Chinggis began parceling fields and pastures in north China as rewards to members of his family and clan (the *altan urugh*) and to his principal allies and followers. This kind of enfeoffment was a customary practice in Mongolian patrimonial feudalism, which regarded all the possessions in the *ulus* as communal properties to be shared by members of the *altan urugh* and their allies. As a result, a large number of fief appanages, known as *t'ou-*

---

measures manuelles et par référence au corps chez les Mongols: Note de folklore juridique," in Louis Ligeti, ed., *Mongolian Studies* (Akadémiai Kiadó: Budapest, 1970), pp. 46–48, 51. In his study of the "Stone of Chinggis," however, Igor de Rachewiltz points out that during the Sung, Yüan, and Ming periods, the value of the *ch'ih* varied between 31 and 32 cm, hence the *pu* (and its Mongolian counterpart) during this early period was 1.55 to 1.6 meters (see n. 13).

[13] For Hsü T'ing's remark, see P'eng Ta-ya and Hsü T'ing, *Hei-ta shih-lüeh*, in Wang Kuo-wei 王國維's *chien-cheng* 箋證, in idem, *Meng-ku shih-liao ssu-chung chiao-chu* 蒙古史料四種校註 (Taipei: Cheng-chung shu-chü, 1962), p. 512. Cf. Haenisch, *Meng-ta pei-lu und Hei-ta shih-lüeh*, p. 194. (The translation reads: "zweihundert Schritt," without additional comments.) There are several important studies of the "Stone of Chinggis," but see the most recent reexamination by Igor de Rachewiltz, "Some Remarks on the Stele of Yisüngge," in *Tractata Altaica*, pp. 487–508. Particular reference to the distance of Yisüngge's bowshot is found on pp. 488, 490, 491.

hsia 投下 in Chinese terminology, was established over the former Chin state under the control of semiautonomous Mongol overlords.[14]

Two contemporary writers painfully recorded the ravage of north China by Mongols and the latter's seizure of lands and goods. Sung Tzu-chen 宋子貞 (1187–1266), who wrote the spirit-way epitaph of Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai 耶律楚材 (1189–1243), Ögödei's chief of the Central Secretariat, left an ominous description. At one point he says: "At the inaugurating era of the nation, [the Mongols] were eagerly engaged in pillage. All [the lands] surrendered [by the former subjects] were given [to individual clansmen]. Every community and every single person came to be possessed by a master, each of whom was independent of the other."[15] Field and pasture lands were now the private property of Mongol noblemen.

P'eng Ta-ya also reported Mongol depredation. He recalls: "In times of normalcy the [Mongol] nation offered no awards [to worthy individuals], but those who won war victories were lavishly rewarded with gold or silver placards, or satin and gauze. When [the Mongols] breached a walled city they unleased [their soldiers] to kidnap sons and daughters [of the captive residents] and to pillage jade and money. The sequence of plunder became a criterion of the relative merit ranking. In pillaging, whoever arrived at a house first would fix an arrow on the door so that no one else dared enter the house."[16] In this context of Mongol ferocity we have another glimpse of arrows used as authentication.

The Mongolian custom of choosing the site of an estate may still exist in the steppe, although it seems to have waned when the Mongol qans adopted institutionalized procedures of Chinese dynastic administration. The traditional Chinese method of granting fiefs was simply to make an allotment from the state's land and household registers. Upon capturing Chung-tu, the Mongol commanders quickly seized census records from the Chin archives, as they did in other conquered nations in Eurasia. In subsequent years, from the reign of Ögödei through that of Qubilai Qaghan (r. 1260–1294), most of the land and households granted to the Mongol nobles and their allies (including Han Chinese) as their personal appanages were generally based on the registration records. There are ample references in *Yüan-shih* concerning the size of grants to meritorious noblemen and other officials in north China during the early years of the Mongol conquest.[17]

QUBILAI QAGHAN'S SITING OF THE GREAT WAN-AN MONASTERY

Shooting arrows as a method of siting lands and buildings was applied for a different objective under Qubilai Qaghan. An extraordinary case in the sources is that of Qubilai's siting a new Buddhist monastery in the Yüan capital. His act coincided with the building of Ta-tu, a triple-walled grand capital planned by the monk Tzu-tsung 子聰, later known as Liu Ping-chung 劉秉忠 (1216–1274), the leading Chinese confidant of the qaghan. Liu was credited with the architectural design as well as the execution of this enormous construction project.[18]

The monastery was named Ta-sheng-shou wan-an ssu 大聖壽萬安寺 (Great Wan-an Monastery for the Emperor's Birthday) and was located in the Fu-t'ien district 福田坊 north of P'ing-tse Gate 平則門. This in turn was on the left bank of the Chin-shui River 金水河 in the southwest corner of the outer walled city of Ta-tu. Qubilai's establishment of the site is recorded in the Buddhist chronicle *Fo-tsu li-tai t'ung-tsai* 佛祖歷代通載, compiled by the eminent monk Nien-ch'ang 念常 (1282–1344). It reads: "When the emperor (Qubilai) decided to build the Great Wan-an Monastery for the Emperor's Birthday, he took aim at four directions, and shot an arrow in each direction to determine the perimeter."[19] In this episode, the qaghan apparently emulated his grandfather, who instructed generals to shoot arrows to determine their personal fiefs.

---

[14] For a general background of this Mongolian social custom and its ramifications, see B. Ya. Vladimirtsov, M. Carsow trans., *La régime sociale des Mongols: Féodalisme nomade* (Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, 1948), chap. 2; Iwamura Shinobu 岩村忍, *Mongoru shakai keizaishi kenkyū* モンゴル社會經濟史研究 (Kyoto: Kyōdai Jimbun kagaku kenkyūjo, 1968), part 2, chap. 3; Jagchid Sechen and Paul Hyer, *Mongolia's Culture and Society* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979), chap. 6, and Han Ju-lin 韓儒林 et al., *Yüan-ch'ao shih* 元朝史 (Peking: Jen-min, 1986) 1, chap. 3. There are several important studies of the *t'ou-hsia* system. See, for example, Murakami Masatsugu 村上正二, "Genchō ni okeru toka no igi" 元朝における投下の意義, *Mōko gakuho* 蒙古學報 1 (1940), pp. 169–216; Chou Liang-hsiao 周良霄, "Yüan-tai t'ou-hsia fen-feng chih-tu ch'u-t'an" 元代投下分封制度初探, *Yüan-shih lun-ts'ung* 元史論叢 2 (1983), pp. 53–76; and most recently, Hung, "T'ou-hsia," pp. 843–907. Hung's study is by far the most comprehensive and instructive.

[15] Sung Tzu-chen, "Chung-shu ling Yeh-lü kung shen-tao pei" 中書令耶律公神道碑, in Su T'ien-chüeh 蘇天爵, *Kuo-ch'ao (Yüan) wen-lei* 國朝 (元) 文類 (SPTK edn.) 57, p. 16a.

[16] See Wang, *Hei-ta shih-lüeh chien-cheng*, pp. 496–97. Cf. Haenisch, *Meng-ta pei-lu und Hei-ta shih-lüeh*, pp. 161, 162.

[17] On the Mongol rulers' seizure of census and land records when they captured an enemy's city and established control, beginning with Chinggis through Qubilai, see *Sheng-wu ch'in-cheng lu* 聖武親征錄 and P'eng and Hsü, *Hei-ta shih-lüeh*, in Wang, *Meng-ku shih-liao*, pp. 213–15, 492–93; Sung, "Yeh-lü kung shen-tao pei," in Su, *Kuo (Yüan)-ch'ao wen-lei* 57, pp. 14a–16b, and *YS* 2, p. 34; 4, p. 59; 98, p. 2510; 146, p. 3459. This was the practice not only in China, but also in Iran and Russia. For a succinct account, see Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of the Grand Qan Mongke in China, Russia, and the Islamic Lands, 1251–1259* (Berkeley: U. of California P., 1987), chap. 5. For a summary of the fields and pasture lands granted to the Mongol nobles and meritorious officials in Ögödei's reign and thereafter, see Li Kan 李幹, *Yüan-tai she-hui ching-chi shih-kao* 元代社會經濟史稿 (Ching-chou: Hu-pei jen-min, 1985), pp. 61–63, and Han, *Yüan-ch'ao shih* 1, pp. 218–24.

[18] For important studies of the Yüan capital Ta-tu, see the bibliography appended to my article: Ch'en Hsüeh-lin 陳學霖 (Hok-lam Chan), "Yüan Ta-tu ch'eng chien-tsao ch'uan-shuo t'an-yüan" 元大都城建造傳說探源, *Han-hsüeh yen-chiu* 漢學研究 (Taipei) 5.1 (1987), pp. 123–24. For other references, see Hok-lam Chan, "A Mongolian Legend of the Building of Peking," *AM* 3d ser. 3.2 (1990), pp. 63–64, nn. 1, 4; also Steinhardt, *Imperial City Planning*, chap. 7. On Liu Ping-chung's life and career, see Hok-lam Chan, "Liu Ping-chung (1216–74): A Buddhist-Taoist Statesman at the Court of Khubilai Khan," *TP* 53.1–3 (1967), pp. 98–146, and Yüan Chi 袁冀, *Yüan T'ai-pao Ts'ang-ch'un san-jen Liu Ping-chung p'ing-shu* 元太保藏春散人劉秉忠評述 (Taipei: T'ai-wan shang-wu, 1974).

According to *Yüan-shih*, early in 1271 Qubilai ordered the building of a Tibetan Lamaist stupa on the base of a dilapidated Liao pagoda in Ta-tu called Pai-t'a ssu 白塔寺 (White Pagoda) Monastery. The Liao religious monument had been built in 1096 under the auspices of the Liao emperor Tao-tsung 道宗 (r. 1055–1100). The new stupa was designed by a foreign architect, A-ni-ko 阿尼哥 (Araniko; 1244–1306), a prince from the kingdom of Nepal who was recruited to the Yüan capital by the state preceptor (*kuo-shih* 國師), the Tibetan Buddhist patriarch 'Phags-pa (1239?-1280). It was built in the Nepalese white-wash architectural style, fifty-one meters in height. Qubilai's new White Pagoda was completed in 1279. At that time a monastery was ordered to be built with the pagoda as the epicenter. It was completed in May of 1288 and named Ta-sheng-shou Wan-an ssu.[20]

Because the monastery was devoted exclusively to the Yüan emperor, a special bureau known as Endowment Intendancy for the Great Wan-an Temple (Wan-an kuei-yün t'i-tien so 萬安規運提點所) was founded in 1311 to manage its financial affairs. Its status was subsequently upgraded and was placed under the management of the Directorate-General of Sacrifices and Funds for the Several Temples (Shou-fu tsung-kuan fu 壽福總管府) when the latter was established in 1328. The main building of the monastery was destroyed by fire from lightning in July 1368, shortly before the demise of the Yüan regime. In 1433 the Ming emperor Hsüan-tsung 宣宗 (r. 1426–1435) had built a huge Taoist shrine named Ch'ao-t'ien kung 朝天宮, which was located in the northwest area of the pagoda. But in 1457, in the second reign of the emperor Ying-tsung 英宗 (r. 1457–1464), the shrine was razed to build a new monastery called Miao-ying ssu 妙應寺, again with the pagoda as the epicenter. The new complex became known popularly as Miao-ying ssu pai-t'a and still stands at the northern corner of the Fu-ch'eng men Street in the western section of present-day Peking.[21]

Where in fact did Qubilai stand when he shot arrows to determine the area of the monastery? In the light of the architectural layout of present-day Miao-ying Monastery, a recent scholar suggests that Qubilai most probably shot the arrows from atop the White Pagoda. He observes that, based on his own calculation, the distance of a bowshot was between 192 and 240 meters. The distance from the south end of the White Pagoda to the outer boundary of the monastery presently located at Lin-chieh shan Gate 臨街山門 in Peking is roughly 200 meters. Therefore, he estimates that the north to south and the east to west axes of the monastery would each measure 400 meters, and the total area approximately 160,000 square meters (or 0.16 square kilometers).[22]

---

[19] Nien-ch'ang, *Fo-tsu li-tai t'ung-tsai*, in *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–32) vol. 49, *ch.* 22, p. 723b. Nien-ch'ang attributed this statement to *Shih-tsu shih-lu* 世祖實錄 (*Veritable Records of Qubilai Qaghan*), to which he did not gain access (it is no longer extant). Fortunately, a compendium of one hundred entries on Buddhism during Qubilai's reign was copied into a Buddhist work called *Hung-chiao chi* 弘教集 (now also lost), which Nien-ch'ang did cite; see ibid, p. 725a.

[20] For Qubilai's building of the White Pagoda and the Ta-hsing-shou Wan-an Monastery, see *YS* 7, p. 114; 15, p. 311. The dates of the construction and completion of the stupa are recorded in Hsiang-mai 祥邁, "Sheng-chih t'e-chien shih-chia she-li ling-t'ung chih t'a pei-wen" 聖旨特建釋家舍利靈通之塔碑文, in idem, *(Chih-yüan) Pien-wei lu* (至元) 辨僞錄, included in *Taishō*, vol. 52, *ch.* 5, pp. 779b–781a. On the early history and location of the White Pagoda, see Hsiung, *Hsi-chin chih*, p. 117, and Miao, *Shun-t'ien fu chih*, p. 6. Cf. Hou, *Pei-ching li-shih ti-t'u chi*, p. 28. For information on its later development, see n. 21, below.

A-ni-ko was the most distinguished foreign architect in Qubilai's service. He died in China and his craftsmanship was continued by his son and disciples. His biographies are in *YS* 203, p. 4545, and Ch'eng Chü-fu 程鉅夫, "Liang-kuo Min-hui kung shen-tao pei" 涼國敏慧公神道碑, in *Ch'eng Hsüeh-lou wen-chi* 程雪樓文集 (Taipei: National Central Library, 1970) 7, pp. 8a–11b. See also Wang, *Yüan-jen chuan-chi* 4, p. 2227. The *YS* biography is translated; see Sylvain Lévi in *Le Népal, étude historique d'un royaume Hindou* 3, in *Annales du Musée Guimet, bibliothèque d'études* 19 (1908), pp. 187–89. For A-ni-ko's career, see Ishida Mikinosuke 石田幹之助, "Gendai no kogeika Neparu no ozoku Aniko no den ni tsuite" 元代の工藝家ネパルの王族阿尼哥傳について, *Mōko gakuhō* 2 (1941), pp. 244–60; also Luciano Petech, *Mediaeval History of Nepal (c. 750–1482)*, 2d edn. (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1984), pp. 99–102; and Mao Hsi-sheng 毛希聖, "Chung-Ni yu-i ch'iao-liang ti chia-she che A-ni-ko ho Liu Yüan" 中尼友誼橋梁的架設者阿尼哥和劉元," in Peking Municipal Research Institute of Social Sciences, ed., *Pei-ching shih-yüan* 北京史苑 (Peking: Pei-ching, 1985) 2, pp. 155–62.

A-ni-ko probably did not design the Wan-an Monastery, based on contemporary descriptions of the (Ta Ch'eng-hua) P'u-ch'ing ssu (大承華) 普慶寺 (Great P'u-ch'ing Temple for Receiving Glory), which was modeled after it. The 1308 P'u-ch'ing Monastery, located in T'ai-p'ing fang 太平坊 north of the Wan-an, memorialized the grandmother of emperor Qayishan (r. 1308–11), Bailan Yekechi, the wife of Jingim (1243–1285). She died in early 1300 and was posthumously canonized as the Hui-jen yü-sheng 徽仁裕聖 empress dowager. See Yao Sui 姚燧, "P'u-ch'ing ssu pei" 普慶寺碑, in *Mu-an chi* 牧庵集 (SPTK edn.) 11, pp. 6a–8b. Details are in Chao Meng-fu 趙孟頫, "Ta Yüan Ta P'u-ch'ing ssu pei ming" 大元大普慶寺碑銘, in *Sung-hsüeh chai wen-chi* 松雪齊文集(SPTK edn.), sect. "Shih-wen wai-chi" 詩文外集, pp. 9a–13b.

[21] On the management of the Ta-sheng-shou Wan-an Monastery and its development under later Yüan rulers, see *YS* 25, p. 568; 47, p. 985; 51, p. 1101; 87, p. 2213. Cf. David M. Farquhar, *Chinese Government under Mongolian Rule: A Research Guide* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1989), p. 150. For the development of the monastery since the Yüan, see Wu Ch'ang-yüan 吳長元, *Ch'en-yüan chih-lüeh* 宸垣識略 (Peking: Pei-ching, 1981), p. 143; Li Tsung-wan 勵宗萬, *Ching-ch'eng ku-chi k'ao* 京城古蹟考 (Peking: Pei-ching ku-chi, 1981), p. 13; Cultural Artifact Preservation Bureau, Peking Pai-t'a ssu, ed., *Miao-ying ssu Pai-t'a* 妙應寺白塔 (Peking: Wen-wu, 1985), and Kuo Tzu-sheng 郭子昇, *Pei-ching miao-hui chiu-su* 北京廟會舊俗 (Peking: Chung-kuo hua-ch'iao ch'u-pan kung-ssu, 1989), pp. 28–33.

The Mongolian crossbow, however, was much more powerful, and, if a bowshot ranged from 300 to 500 meters as suggested above, the total area of the monastery would have been larger, at least double this estimate. It is quite possible that the current perimeter of Miao-ying Monastery is smaller than its predecessor in Yüan times. In any case, with such a huge courtyard, there was ample space to house a variety of grand festivities on the emperor's birthday. The bustle and pomp around the monastery left a poignant impression on Marco Polo, as seen by the account of Ta-tu in his *Description of the World*.[23] Such was the result of the arrows shot by Qubilai Qaghan.

As in the case of the comparable custom in ancient and medieval Europe and Inner Asia, the distance of a bowshot became a formal measure of length in the Mongolian state administration. This is attested in Latin, Persian, Chinese, and Mongolian sources. We do not know if the administrative development occurred in Chinggis's time, but it existed under Ögödei Qaghan. The evidence is found in Rashid al-Din's description of Ögödei's palace in Qora Qorum called Qarshi (Wan-an kung 萬安宮, Myriad Tranquilities Palace). Rashid's *Jāmiʿ al-tawārikh* uses an expression rendered in translation as "an arrow-shot long," or "the distance of a bowshot," to describe the length of every wing of the palace.[24] Such an expression was used earlier by the Franciscan friar William of Rubruck (1215/1220–?), who visited Möngke Qaghan's (r. 1251–1258) court in Qara Qorum in the winter of 1253. The friar reminisces that the visitors to the palace "have to alight from their horses a long way from the dwelling (the *ordo*) where the qaghan is, about a bowshot." He also states that on his return journey, he saw, "facing the *ordo* towards the east, distant from it twice as far as one can shoot with a crossbow," a building with a little cross on its top. In both cases, although the authors used expressions familiar from their own societies, it is evident that they also referred to the current Mongolian usage.[25]

By Qubilai's time a bowshot was obviously well established as a standard measure of length. For instance, Marco Polo used the expression "about a bowshot off" estimating the distance between the imperial city of Ta-tu and the nearby Millennial Longevity Mount (Wan-shou shan 萬壽山, also known as Pai-t'a shan 白塔山). In his translation of Polo's *Description*, Feng Ch'eng-chün 馮承鈞 makes this point more clear by adopting the Chinese phrase *i-chien chih ti* 一箭之地 ("the space of a bowshot").[26] This phrase appears several times in the Chinese standard histories of the T'ang and Five Dynasties periods in reference to a Turkic and Inner Asian custom of using the bowshot as a measure of length.[27] In another case, in the Yüan gazetteer of Ta-tu titled *Hsi-chin chih* 析津志, we find the term *pan chien* 半箭 (half the space of a bowshot) in an entry about a plot of rice field inside the Hou-tsai men 厚載門, the northern gate of the imperial city. It says that every year Qubilai and his attendants spent time personally planting crops and tilling a field covering "half the space of a bowshot," that is, about 150 to 250 meters on a side, in order to demonstrate imperial regard for agriculture. However, it appears that they were performing a symbolic farming ritual rather than actually engaging in physical labor.[28] Such use of expressions pertaining to a bowshot in Yüan times thus attests the place of the Mongolian custom within institutional developments.

---

[22] Yang I 楊毅, "She-chien hua ssu-chieh pao-ma kuan-shan men Yüan Ta-tu Sheng-shou Wan-an ssu kuei-mo so-t'an" 射箭劃寺界跑馬關山門元大都聖壽萬安寺規模瑣談, *Yen-tu* 燕都 1 (1985), pp. 24–25. This interesting article is marred by careless scholarship and factual errors.

[23] For Marco Polo's remark, see Sir Henry Yule, trans. and annot., *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, 3d edn. (1903; rpt. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929) 1, book 2, chap. 10, pp. 360 ff. See also A. C. Moule and Paul Pelliot, trans. and eds., *Marco Polo, The Description of the World* (London: George Routledge, 1938) 1, pp. 207 ff.

[24] For Rashid al-Din's remark, see *Jamiʿ al-tawārikh* (trans. Ju. P. Verkhovsky, *Sbornik letopisei* [Moscow: Nauka, 1960] 2, p. 40). Spuler translates the phrase as "each side of the palace was an arrowshot long," whereas Boyle has "the length of every wing of it (the palace) was the distance of a bowshot." See Bertold Spuler, *History of the Mongols: Based on Eastern and Western Accounts of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, Helga and Stuart Drummond trans. (Berkeley: U. of California P., 1972), p. 59, and Rashid al-Din, *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, trans. John A. Boyle (New York: Columbia U.P., 1971), p. 61. Ögödei's 1235 palace was in walled Qara Qorum; see *YS* 2, p. 34. Cf. Francis W. Cleaves, "The Sino-Mongolian Inscription of 1346," *HJAS* 15.1–2 (1952), p. 25. Among several important studies of Qara Qorum, see esp. Sergei Kiselev, *Drevnemongol'skie goroda* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), and more recently, Cha-ch'i-ssu-ch'in 札奇斯欽 (Jagchid Sechen), "Meng-ku ti-kuo shou-tu Ho-lin" 蒙古帝國首都和林, in *Kuo-chi Sung-shih yen-t'ao hui lun-wen chi* 國際宋史研討會論文集 (Taipei: Chinese Cultural University, 1988), pp. 23–52.

[25] On William of Rubruck's remarks, see Christopher Dawson, ed., *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, trans. by a nun of Stanbrook Abbey (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), p. 150. For a succinct account of Friar William's journey to Mongolia (1253–1255), see Igor de Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1971), chap. 6. The expression the friar used echoed a custom in ancient and medieval Europe. For instance, Homer supposedly used for measurement of distances such phrases as "the cast of a stone or quoit or spear." See N. G. L. Hammond et al., eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2d edn. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 659 (under "Measures"). We also find in the medieval Slavic measurement of distance such references as "the cast of an arrow," which was 60 to 70 meters. See Wladyslawa Kowalenki et al., eds., *Slownik Starozytności Słowiańskich* (Wroclaw: Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1967) 3, p. 205 (under "Miary i wagi").

[26] For Marco Polo's remark, see Yule, *Marco Polo* 1, book 2, chap. 10, p. 365. Moule and Pelliot translated this phrase as "about one crossbow-shot distant from the palace" in *Marco Polo* 1, p. 210. Feng Ch'eng-chün's translation is based on A. J. H. Charignon, *Le Livre de Marco Polo* (Peking: Henri Vetch, 1924–28). His use of the term *i-chien chih ti* appears in *Ma-k'o-po-lo hsing-chi* 馬可波羅行記 (Shanghai: Chung-hua, 1955) 2, p. 235.

[27] For example, we find an expression *k'uo i-chien tao* 闊一箭道 in the biography of Kao Hsien-chih 高仙芝, a general of Koryŏ origin serving the T'ang emperor Hsüan-tsung 玄宗 (r. 712–55). It refers to the width of a hanging bridge in a Tibetan protectorate northwest of T'u-fan 吐蕃 that Kao destroyed. See Liu Hsü 劉昫 et al, eds., *Chiu T'ang-shu* 舊唐書 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1975) 104, p. 3205. A later version, however, describes the bridge using the expression *i-chien so chi che* 一箭所及者 "the distance traveled by an arrow." See Ou-yang Hsiu 歐陽修 et al., eds., *Hsin T'ang-shu* 新唐書 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1975) 135, p. 4577. Also, we find the expression *i-chien ti* 一箭地 in the biography of Kuo Chin-hai 郭金海, a general of Turkic origin under the founder of the Later Chin kingdom (936–47). It refers to the space Kuo offered to his challenger An Ts'ung-chin 安從進, his former superior, at the battlefront to win his withdrawal in a combat in T'ang-chou 唐州, Honan, in 937. See Hsüeh Chü-cheng 薛居正 et al., eds., *Chiu Wu-tai shih* 舊五代史 (Peking: Chung-

The use of a bowshot as a measure of length persisted and was written into the Mongolian legal codes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the 1640 Oirat code (*chaghaja-yin bichig*) of the Western Mongols, we find a set of provisions concerning the rules to be observed in hunting. Nomads were to hunt by driving (beating) or stalking the game. During a drive, order was strictly observed. Whoever during beating passed or stood by the side of the hunter was fined five animals. A person who got out of line and advanced three bowshots ahead of the others was fined a horse; two bowshots, a sheep, and one bowshot, five arrows.[29] A bowshot, therefore, was recognized in pastoral Mongolian society as a unit of measure with legal implications. There was a comparable reference in a later code of the Northern Mongols known as *Qalqa Jirum* promulgated in 1709. In the provisions concerning the law of private property, we read the following stipulations: "a fox, cornered in a hunt, belonged to the person first catching up with it; dead game found within 500 *alda(n)s* of a crossbow was considered to be the property of the owner of the weapon."[30] These references bear witness to both the continued importance of the bowshot in Mongol socioeconomic life over the centuries and its intimate relationship with folk culture.

A MONGOLIAN PLAN FOR THE MING CAPITAL

After the termination of Yüan rule, Chinese records seem not to contain any more episodes of the Mongolian method of architectural siting. Although we cannot rule out its continuity in the steppe, those Mongols who remained in China and served the Ming rulers had to adapt themselves to Chinese institutions and conform to Chinese practices. When the Mongol military commanders in the Ming service were awarded fields and pasture lands, for example, the size of their grant was decided by the Chinese government on the basis of the state's census and land registers and not by the Mongolian bowshot.[31] Nevertheless, references to the Mongolian practice survived down to modern times in both Mongolian and Chinese legends about the building of capital cities.

The first set of legends concerns the building between 1406 and 1420 of the Ming capital of Peking (Pei-ching 北京) under the Yung-lo 永樂 emperor (Chu Ti 朱棣; r. 1403–1424), the fourth son of the dynastic founder T'ai-tsu 太祖 (Chu Yüan-chang 朱元璋; r. 1368–1398). It was a triple-walled capital built in the former Yüan capital of Ta-tu and was distinguished for its design and architecture. While the history of the construction is fully documented in official and private records, there survives a Mongolian legend, with parallel Chinese versions, about the miraculous building of Peking.[32]

The Mongolian legend is related, *inter alia*, in a Mongolian manuscript dated 1907, but based on much earlier traditions. It concerns the Prince of Yen, the half-Mongol son of Ming T'ai-tsu who became the Yung-lo emperor. In the legend the prince is called the Yüan Prince because Mongolian tradition claimed that he was the posthumous son of the last Yüan emperor Töghon-temür (Shun-ti 順帝; r. 1333–1370) by his Qonggirud consort. He was ordered to build a new capital in the region of Yen. One day on an

---

hua, 1976) 94, p. 1249.

[28] Hsiung, *Hsi-chin chih*, p. 114. The Hou-tsai men, known as Hsüan-wu 玄武 men in the Ming and Shen-wu 神武 men in the Ch'ing, is now the northern entrance of the Palace Museum (Ku-kung po-wu yüan 故宮博物院).

[29] The Oirat code is preserved in several Russian translations. See, for example, K. F. Golstunskii, *Mongolo-oiratskie zakony 1640 goda* . . . (St. Petersburg, 1880). Cf. citation in John R. Krueger, "New Materials on Oirat Law and History, pt. 1," *CAJ* 16.3 (1972), pp. 194–96. For bowshots, see Valentin A. Riasanovsky, *Fundamental Principles of Mongol Law* (Tientsin, 1937; rpt. as Uralic and Altaic Series 43 [Bloomington: Indiana University, 1965]), p. 95. On other studies of the Oirat code, see Pai Ts'ui-ch'in 白翠琴, "Lun Wei-la-t'e fa-tien" 論衛拉特法典, in Tu Jung-k'un 杜榮坤 and Pai Ts'ui-ch'in, *Hsi Meng-ku shih yen-chiu* 西蒙古史研究 (Urumqi: Hsin-chiang jen-min, 1986), pp. 175–97.

[30] The *Qalqa Jirum* was first translated into Russian. See, for example, B. Rintchen, *Qalq-a Jirum: traduit du russe par Dr. Zamtsarano*, in *Studia Mongolica* 1.1 (Ulanbator, 1959). For a study, see Henry Serruys, "Oaths in the *Qalqa Jirum*," *OE* 19.1–2 (1972), pp. 131–41. For references to bowshots in the *Qalqa Jirum*, see Riasanovsky, *Mongol Law*, p. 116.

[31] For details of the fields and pasture lands granted to the Mongols in Ming times, see Henry Serruys, "Landgrants to the Mongols in China: 1400–1450," *MS* 25 (1966), pp. 364–405. On the Mongols who entered into Ming military and other government services, see idem, "The Mongols in China: 1400–1450," *MS* 27 (1968), pp. 233–305.

[32] There are a number of studies on the building of Peking under the Yung-lo emperor. See the bibliography listed in Chan, "Mongolian Legend," pp. 63–64, nn. 1, 6. In addition, see Hsieh Min-tsung 謝敏聰, *Pei-ching ti ch'eng-yüan yü kung-chüeh chih tsai yen-chiu* 北京的城垣與宮闕之再研究 (Taipei: T'ai-wan hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1989), and Steinhardt, *Imperial City Planning*, chap. 8.

outing, the Yüan Prince met a swarthy-faced man in black robes, who rode a black horse. The latter took the prince's bow and arrows and shot one arrow into each of the four directions. He then told the Prince to make Liu Po-wen head minister and at the place so marked to found a great city.[33]

My recent study showed that the account presented here about the Yüan Prince and Liu Po-wen was purely fanciful. In confirmable history, Liu, whose real name was Liu Chi 劉基 (1311–1375), the principal adviser of Ming T'ai-tsu, died when the Prince of Yen was fifteen years of age, and had absolutely nothing to do with the building of the capital in Peking. The black rider with a swarthy face who gave instruction to the prince in fact personified the Dark God Chen-wu 眞武, guardian of the north in the Taoist pantheon. Chen-wu appeared prominently in folklore as the principal deity who secretly aided the prince later at the start of his campaign to dethrone his nephew the Chien-wen 建文 emperor (Chu Yün-wen 朱允炆; r. 1399–1402). Liu Chi, who was apotheosized as a prescient hero with supernatural capabilities in Chinese folk tradition, is presented here as the principal architect in the building of the capital city, namely, Liu Po-wen.[34]

In this account, the most striking episode lies in the swarthy-faced rider and his shooting of arrows to choose the site of the future capital. Here we have the folkloric memory of the historical incidents in which Chinggis Qan rewarded his comrades and Qubilai shot arrows to decide the domain of the Buddhist monastery in Ta-tu. The fact that the Ming capital was built over the remnants of the Yüan capital, and that a substantial Mongol population remained in Peking after the demise of Yüan rule provided the conditions that easily inspired the transmission of these Mongolian beliefs.

THE MONGOLIAN SITING CUSTOM DESCRIBED IN CHINESE FOLKTALES

Chinese legends and folktales about Yung-lo's building the Ming capital city of Peking comprise one of the most popular folklore traditions in modern times. The most celebrated of the stories describes Liu Po-wen's city plan, which, as I have examined elsewhere, symbolized the body of the mythic Buddhist child-deity No-cha 那吒 (Nata in Tantric Buddhism). The divine powers of No-cha made him an ideal protector of the capital: he exorcised the wicked demons and subdued drought-bringing dragons who were said to reside underground. There is, moreover, another version related by contemporary story tellers in Peking that includes an episode about the specific tactics used in siting the capital city—techniques ingrained in the Mongolian tradition.[35]

The Chinese folktale just mentioned was transmitted as an integral part of the legend of Liu Po-wen. It is entitled: "Liu Po-wen Builds the City of Peking" ("Liu Po-wen chien Pei-ching ch'eng" 劉伯溫建北京城). Generally, we cannot establish the dates of such stories, but they probably began to flourish late in the nineteenth century. The story does not have the familiar episode in which Liu Po-wen invoked the spirit of No-cha in making the city plan, but it presents several new twists that make it popular among professional story tellers' audiences in modern Peking.[36] The story begins with a dialogue between the Yung-lo emperor and his two confidants, adviser Liu Po-wen and general Hsü Ta 徐達 (1329–1383), who was a distinguished comrade-in-arms of the dynastic founder. Hsü is credited with having led the Ming army in capturing Ta-tu from the fleeing Mongols in 1369. His special relationship with the Yung-lo emperor increased when his eldest daughter became the empress Hsü (1362–1407).[37]

The Yung-lo emperor's seeking advice from Liu Po-wen and Hsü Ta, however, is historically inaccurate. Liu had already passed away when the prince was enfeoffed at Yen, and Hsü never lived to see the new emperor give orders to build a new capital in the north. That the two were brought into the company of Yung-lo and each credited with a different architectural role was due largely to Mongolian folkloric imagination. The following is a summary of "Liu Po-wen Builds the City of Peking."

---

[33] I have elsewhere studied this legend and commented upon the late Reverend Henry Serruys's earlier work on it; see Hok-lam Chan, "Mongolian Legend."

[34] On Liu Chi (Liu Po-wen), see Chan, "Mongolian Legend," p. 65, n. 7; for the Prince of Yen's campaign against the Chien-wen emperor, see ibid., p. 78, n. 13.

[35] The No-cha aspect of Ming Peking began with the building of the Yüan capital Ta-tu by the principal architect Liu Ping-chung. The Ming legend, an evolution of the Yüan legend, unhistorically calls Liu Po-wen the grandson of Liu Ping-chung. See Chan, "Yüan Ta-tu," and idem, Mongolian Legend."

[36] The text of this story is included in Folk Literature Research Society of China, Peking Branch, ed., *Pei-ching feng-wu ch'uan-shuo* 北京風物傳說 (Peking: Chung-kuo min-chien wen-i ch'u-pan she, 1983), pp. 1–7. This published version is based on the oral narrative of an elderly story teller who performed at the "temple fair" (*miao-hui* 廟會) in P'an-t'ao kung 蟠桃宮 in Peking. The narrative was transcribed in 1961. For a description of P'an-tao kung, see Tada Teiichi 多田貞一, *Pei-ching ti-ming chih* 北京地名志, trans. Chang Tzu-ch'en 張紫晨 (Peking: Shu-mu wen-hsien, 1986), p. 89. The shrine is located in the Tung-pien Gate 東便門 of present-day Peking and is devoted to the worship of the legendary goddess Hsi-wang mu 西王母.

[37] For the biographies of Hsü Ta and Empress Hsü, see Chang T'ing-yü 張廷玉 et al., eds., *Ming-shih* 明史 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1974) 125, p. 3723; 113, p. 3509; also L. C. Goodrich and C. Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368–1644* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1976), pp. 556–69, 602–7.

The story holds that when the Prince of Yen contemplated building a northern capital he solicited grand minister Liu Po-wen for advice. Liu desisted, suggesting to the Prince that he should ask the great general Hsü Ta to take charge. The Prince thus sent for the general. Upon Hsü's arrival, Liu said to him, "Harness your divine strength to shoot an arrow towards the north; wherever the arrow falls, build the capital city there." Hsü consented, and, standing outside the palace, he drew the bow with all his might. The single arrow, as it turned out, flew a long distance, traversing more than twenty *li* (ten kilometers) to a place called Nan-yüan 南苑 (South Park), south of present-day Peking. At that time eight households of minor wealth existed there. They were alarmed by the fallen arrow, and worried that if the capital city were built there, all their houses and fields would be confiscated.

At this juncture, one of these wealthy men thought of a clever idea. He said, "Why don't we just shoot the arrow away?" Everyone applauded; and so he shot the arrow towards the north, and it fell into the area of the Hou-men 後門 (Rear Gate) Bridge of present-day Peking. We learn also that people there erected a stone epitaph with the inscription "Pei-ching ch'eng 北京城" (Peking City) under the bridge, marking the spot of the fallen arrow. Just then, Liu Po-wen, having prescient knowledge of the fallen arrow, took his men to South Park and asked the householders for the arrow. Realizing they could not cover up the incident, they confessed. They begged Liu Po-wen not to build the capital there, and promised to accept any counter requests.

In response, Liu said, "Well, I don't necessarily need to build the capital city here, but I shall build it on the spot of the fallen arrow that you shot, and you should bear all the expenses!" The wealthy men yielded, and so Liu proceeded to the location of the fallen arrow; there he produced the city plan he had drafted earlier and ordered the laborers to start construction. The rest of the story is about the shortfall of construction funds due to the financial exhaustion of the households. Liu Po-wen hence devised an ingenious scheme to harrass an eccentric wealthy man known as Shen Wan-san 沈萬三, or Shen Fu 沈富, into turning over his hoard of silver.[58]

What really concerns us here is the first part of the story, which interpolates the Mongolian custom of selecting the site of Peking by shooting four arrows. The idea became a topos in sinitic folk literature. Although only a single arrow was shot in this case, it is clear that the subplot reflects the

---

[58] Shen was a rich merchant of Soochow who became the subject of popular mythologization because of his enormous wealth. See Chan, "Mongolian Legend," p. 85, n. 38.

lingering memory of the Mongolian custom. Its presence not only stirs the popular imagination, but also alludes to a strong link between the Mongolian and Chinese traditions concerning the building of Peking.

There is a similar episode about the Mongolian custom that appears in a modern Chinese folktale called "The Falcon Gripping the Arrow" ("Ying-ch'ia chien" 鷹夾箭); it treats the building of the earlier Ming capital at Nan-ching 南京. Standard historical texts claim that this double-walled capital was built on the advice of Liu Chi (Liu Po-wen), Ming T'ai-tsu's confidant, who had chosen the site south of Mount Chung 鍾山 in the autumn of 1366, two years before the founding of the new dynasty. In 1369 workers began construction of the new capital east of the Pai-hsia Gate 白下門 of the old city; it included a walled imperial city and palace city with a perimeter of sixty-one *li* (31.5 kilometers). The imperial city was completed in the fall of 1373, but other constructions continued into the 1380s. The imperial city and new palaces of Nanking were to provide the blueprint of the "Forbidden City" of Peking when the Yung-lo emperor ordered that the new city should be a replica of his father's old establishment.[59]

The episode in "Ying-ch'ia chien" about the siting of Nanking differs from the information in historical texts. It was evidently inspired by both the Mongolian and Chinese versions of the legend of the building of Peking stated above, although no dates can be established for its genesis and transmission. However, while the central theme is the origin of Nanking, "Ying-ch'ia chien" begins with the building of a new Ming capital city called Chung-tu 中都 (Central Metropolis) at Feng-yang 鳳陽, modern Anhwei, which was the native home of Ming T'ai-tsu. Its construction is said to have been ordered in 1369, and work continued during the next five years, aiming at completing a grand metropolis for the national capital. But the project is said to have been abruptly suspended in 1375 when the emperor realized that both the people and his own treasury were exhausted. Contrary to the assertion of the folktale, Ming Chung-tu was never completed.[40]

---

[59] This first Ming capital was the site of the ancient capital Chin-ling 金陵, known as Chi-ch'ing 集慶 and then Ying-t'ien 應天 Administration (modern Kiangsu) in late Yüan. It was known as Nan-ching 南京 since the Ming founding. On the construction of the new capital city and palace buildings, see *Ming T'ai-tsu shih-lu* 明太祖實錄 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1962) 21, p. 195; 201, p. 3007; *Ming-shih* 1, p. 14; 40, p. 910. See also Wang I-hua 王一化 et al., *Ying-t'ien fu chih* 府志 (1577 edn.) 3, 4b; Wang Huan-piao 王煥鑣, *Shou-tu chih* 首都志 (Nanking: Cheng-chung shu-chü, 1935), pp. 71–73. Liu Chi's exact role in building the new capital is not clear, but according to the *shih-lu*, he was one of Chu Yüan-chang's confidants entrusted with selecting the site. An anonymous semihistorical miscellany, *Chien-chu ts'ung-pien* 剪燭叢編, quoted in Wang Hsin-i 王馨一, *Liu Po-wen nien-p'u* 劉伯溫年譜 (Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1936), p. 70, claims that Liu applied the craft of geomancy in the process of siting. A monographic study of Nanking under the Ming comparable to those on Peking is still wanting. See, among others, Chu Hsieh 朱偰, *Chin-ling ku-chi t'u k'ao* 金陵古蹟圖考 (Shanghai: Shang-wu, 1936), chap. 10; F. W. Mote, "The Transformation of Nanking, 1350–1400," in G. William Skinner, ed., *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1967), pp. 101–53, 689–96; Farmer, *Dual Capitals*, pp. 51–57; Department of Geography, Nanking Teacher's College, ed., *Chiang-su ch'eng-shih ti-li* 江蘇城市地理 (Nanking: Chiang-su k'o-hsüeh chi-shu, 1982), chap. 1; and Steinhardt, *Imperial City Planning*, pp. 161–66.

The "Ying-ch'ia chien" episode begins with a fictitious claim of the completion of Chung-tu. It relates that after the completion of the walled city at Feng-yang, Ming T'ai-tsu, with a coterie of civil and military officials, arrived at the site from Nanking for a jubilant inspection in preparation for transferring the main capital. As the emperor was basking in the exuberant applause of his ministers, his principal adviser Liu Po-wen remained glum and silent. Dumbfounded, the emperor demanded an explanation. Liu instantly fell on his knees, explaining that he was deeply distressed by the inauspicious geomancy.

Looking to the north, Liu explained, the city is exposed to the swamps of Fang-ch'iu 方丘 Lake; if the enemy were to attack, the bushy willows would easily conceal a large army of invaders. Turning to the northwest, he said, there is the Ma-an 馬鞍 (Horse Saddle) Mount; if the enemy were to assault from atop with cannon, the cannon balls would easily bombard the city. Therefore, he begged to build the capital elsewhere. The emperor then inquired about the site, and Liu responded that it should be built at "the place of the fallen arrow" (*i-chien chih ti*). When the emperor pressed him for an explanation, Liu asked him to shoot an arrow southeastwards, saying that the location of the fallen arrow should be the site of the new capital. Impressed by his knowledge of geomancy, the emperor did as told, drawing a bow with all his strength, and the arrow streaked towards the southeast like lightning, traveling forty-five *li* (22.5 kilometers).

As its flight weakened, a golden falcon suddenly swooped down from the air, and gripped the arrow with its beak, and then spurted away dashing in the same direction of the arrow. Finally, after departing Feng-yang and traversing the Yangtze, the falcon arrived at Nanking and loosened its grip; thereby the emperor's arrow dropped into the city. Several days later, people came forward with a report of the sighting of the arrow, and so the emperor realized that it was the will of the spirits that the capital should be built in Nanking. It turned out that the golden falcon was the avatar of the Grand White, or Golden Star ([*t'ai-pai*] *chin-hsing* [太白] 金星), the brightest star in the east to be on duty in the Heavenly Palace that day. Having overheard the conversation between the emperor and Liu Po-wen, the star-avatar presaged the arrow's falling into Nanking, and so he transformed himself into a falcon to ensure its occurrence for T'ai-tsu's sake. It is for this reason that the story came to be known by its title.[41]

Naturally, such a tale has no parallel evidence. According to historical records, when Liu Chi was entrusted with the design of the new palace and capital at Nanking, he invoked the craft of geomancy, choosing an auspicious site that lay south of Mount Chung and the Pai-hsia Gate of the historical capital. The Chung-tu city at Feng-yang was patterned after Nanking and in fact was built later, not earlier, than it. The Ming founder soon abandoned the thought of making his native place of Feng-yang the main capital and suspended the gigantic construction.[42]

The interpolation of the story of Chung-tu, with an allusion to the Mongolian custom of siting by shooting arrows is intriguing. It must have first started as part of the legend of the building of Peking, which was much influenced by the Mongolian folk tradition, and, in the course of transmission, because of the close affinity between Peking and Nanking as dual capitals, the Peking legend came to be infused with that of the building of Nanking. It is with an ironic twist of popular imagination that Ming T'ai-tsu, the anti-Mongol Chinese dynastic founder, became enveloped in legends of Mongolian origin.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing samples of historical and folkloric literature vividly illustrate a tenacious Mongolian custom that has hitherto received scant attention from scholars. The custom apparently made a significant imprint on Chinggis Qan in his enfeoffment to his family members and loyal servants of estates in modern Peking. It also left a mark on Qubilai, who shot arrows to determine the site of a Buddhist monastery and made the bowshot a standard measure of length. We do not know if the later Mongol-Yüan rulers maintained the practice, but judging from the echos in Mongolian and Chinese folk literature, even though the custom was not upheld, its memory persisted in the historical psyche. A few observations might help us assess the implications of this Mongolian custom in the broader institutional and cultural perspectives of Sino-Mongolian studies.

---

[40] On the construction of Chung-tu in Feng-yang, see *Ming T'ai-tsu shih-lu* 45, p. 880; 99, p. 1685; *Ming-shih* 2, pp. 23, 30; 40, p. 912. For details, see Wang Chien-ying 王劍英, "Ming Chung-tu t'i-yao" 明中都提要, *Chien-chu li-shih yü li-lun* 建築歷史與理論 2 (1981), pp. 162–71; Wu T'ing-mei 吳庭美 and Hsia Yü-jun 夏玉潤, eds., *Feng-yang ku-chin* 鳳陽古今 (Ho-fei: Huang-shan shu-she, 1986), chap. 3. Liu Chi was one of T'ai-tsu's senior officials who advised against designating Feng-yang as the national capital. Late in 1368, before retiring, he pleaded with the emperor: "Even though Feng-yang is your majesty's native place, it should not be made into a capital." See *Ming-shih* 128, p. 3780, based on Huang Po-sheng 黃伯生, "Ch'eng-i po Liu-kung hsing-chuang" 誠意伯劉公行狀, in Liu Chi, *Ch'eng-i po wen-chi* 文集 (SPTK edn.), p. 8a. On Feng-yang as an aspect of T'ai-tsu's strategy, see Farmer, *Dual Capitals*, pp. 45–51, and also Steinhardt, *Imperial City Planning*, pp. 166–69.

[41] Excerpted in *Feng-yang ku-chin*, pp. 206–7. The source has not been identified.

[42] On Liu Chi's role in the building of new city and palaces at Nanking and his supposed use of geomancy in siting the capital, see the references cited in n. 39.

The custom was most of all a product of Mongolian pastoral culture, in which bows and arrows were principal implements of livelihood. Skillful archery, though also affected by external factors such as the direction and velocity of the wind, relied heavily on individual abilities, and it held the key to success and rewards. Thus, shooting arrows to choose a site, whether for establishing a fief or other purposes, was a sociopolitical phenomenon that used an individual act. The custom also assumed religious implications, for, as worshippers of heavenly gods and cosmological deities, the Mongols believed that whatever individual skills are present, the blessing of the mystical forces of nature is essential to good fortune.[43]

Not the least significant is the fact that the Mongols, like other nomadic peoples, attached a special identity to arrows and regarded them as a symbol of their rightful, in some sense legal, ownership. For example, Blessed Odoric of Pordenone (1265/1286–1331), one of the early Franciscan friars who journeyed to China between 1325 and 1328, remarks in his description of Mongolian hunting that their arrows had the distinctive marks of their owners, and the animal hit by an arrow with distinctive markings belonged to that particular individual. P'eng Ta-ya also reports that when the Mongols pillaged the towns they conquered, the first arrivals at a house would fix an arrow on the door so that no one else dared enter.[44] In these instances, the arrows were used to signify ownership or occupation, whether temporary or permanent. An arrow that was stuck into an object, or a bow and a quiver of arrows hung over a place, indicated that the place was owned or occupied by the owner of the arrows. An arrow therefore represented a sort of legal ownership. Thus in establishing a personal fief, the domain within the perimeter of four fallen arrows became the rightful possession of the shooter. The incidents of the Mongolian custom described here enhance our understanding of the evolution of Mongolian legal concepts of private property down to their codification in the Oirat *chaghaja-yin bichig* and the *Qalqa Jirum* of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[45]

The gradual waning and eventual disappearance of the Mongolian method of siting fiefs were predictable, because the native practice no longer fit the changed institutional environment. When the Mongol qans, beginning with Chinggis, conquered Chin territories and seized household and land records, the convenience of administering enfeoffment according to individual merit by using these registers was apparent. To the receivers of hereditary fiefs, the Chinese method certainly allowed for gains; following native customs, Mongol lords could acquire an estate no larger than the confines of the fallen arrows. There was a limit of an arrow's distance, no matter how powerful the bow and how skillful the archer. As a result, the more egalitarian and individualistic Mongolian custom for establishing appanages was eventually replaced by the institutionalized, but more hierarchical and rationalized Chinese system.

Lastly, the presence of stories about arrow shooting in both the Mongolian and Chinese legends illustrates the interplay between the two ethnic traditions that dealt with the building of capital cities. The inspiration undoubtedly came from Qubilai's shooting arrows to determine the site of the Ta-sheng-shou Wan-an Monastery, but the development of such legends was facilitated by a conceptual interpenetration of Yüan Ta-tu and its geographic neighbor, Ming Peking. Because of the close relationship between Nanking and Peking as dual capitals of the Ming empire, those cities also interpenetrated.[46] It would be difficult to understand these stories of Peking and Nanking without understanding the Mongolian custom. It has been the folktales that have kept hold on the nomadic traditions and mixed two cultures just below the surface of history.

---

[43] The Mongols worshipped heaven, earth, mountains, streams, wind, rain, and other deities and spirits of nature, and their religion has been characterized as predominantly shamanistic. Beginning with Chinggis, the Mongol qans had steadily embraced and patronized Buddhism (Ch'an and Lamaism), Taoism, Islam, Nestorian Christianity, and other foreign religions, but the Mongols were not completely converted to any of these. For an authoritative study of this subject, see Walter Heissig, *The Religions of Mongolia* (Berkeley: U. of California P., 1980). See also Jagchid and Hyer, *Mongolia's Culture and Society*, chap. 4. Even while the Mongols embraced Chinese geomantic divination, the arrow as a symbol of nomadic culture was still widely used in lamaist ceremonies and shamanistic rituals. For an illustration, see C. R. Bawden, "Calling the Soul: A Mongolian Litany," *BSOAS* 25 (1962), pp. 91–92, and Sárközi, "Mongol Manual of Divination," pp. 591, 600 (n. 29).

[44] Friar Blessed Odoric's remark in Latin is found in A. Van Den Wyngaert, o.f.m., *Sinica Franciscana* 1 (Quaracchi-Firenze, 1929), p. 479. A free English translation is in Anselm M. Romb, *Mission to Cathay: The Biography of Blessed Odoric of Pordenone* (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1956). It reads: "After everyone has shot his arrows—each of which is marked by its owner, in order to be distinguished from other arrows—the emperor orders the word *syo* to be called out (that is, *mercy*) to the animals which were herded together. At once the surviving animals are left to return into the woods. The courtiers then take their arrows from the slain animals. Everyone can easily recognize his own from the markings he has put on the arrows. Everyone keeps the game which has fallen under his arrows" (ibid., p. 112). For a succinct account of Friar Odoric's journey to Mongol China (1325–1328), see de Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys*, chap. 9. For P'eng's observation, see the passage of *Hei-ta shih-lüeh* cited in n. 16. These references have been cited in Serruys, "Arrows and Oaths," p. 287, with additional comments.

[45] For instance, the Oirat code of 1640 stipulates that "when the escape of an animal with an arrow in it was announced and someone then caught it and concealed the fact, he was fined five animals." A similar provision is found in the *Qalqa Jirum* of 1709: "dead game found within 500 alda(n)s of a crossbow was considered to be the property of the owner of the weapon." These are good evidences that the marking of an arrow and the distance of a bowshot constituted a legal sign of private property as late as the eighteenth century. For these citations, see Riasanovsky, *Mongol Law*, pp. 95, 116.

---

[46] We cannot fail to notice that significant adaptations took place in the development of these architectural legends of Peking and Nanking in both the Mongolian and Chinese folkloric traditions. As shown above, the Mongolian folktale about Peking, the Taoist god Chen-wu's assisting the Yung-lo emperor was recast as a Mongol black rider who shot arrows to site the new capital city for the future Ming emperor. Chen-wu, as a Chinese god, would not fit well with the pastoral nomadic tradition. The Chinese story adapted the Mongolian topoi dramatically, and it is significant that only one arrow, instead of the customary four, was shot. This is because the thrust of the Chinese legend has been to justify the choice of Peking or Nanking as the national capital and was not overtly concerned with its size or boundary; hence the shooting of four arrows becomes irrelevant. These two instances therefore show that considerable modifications had taken place in the interactions of Mongolian and Chinese traditions, and that each was geared to the anticipation of its respective audience.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CS	*Chin-shih*	金史
YS	*Yüan-shih*	元史