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*The New Tribal Military Elites in the Service of the Yuan: the Qipchaq Case*

A significant part of the Yuan military elite was composed of the imperial in-law lineages of the tribal nobility (in particular of the Qonggirad, Ikires, Önggüt, and Oyirad), which preserved its long-lasting connections with the Golden *urugh* since the times of Chinggis Khan. Another group of the Yuan top commanders were the descendants of the *keshig* members and the *nökers* of the Great Khans, which also preserved their positions throughout generations (cf. the case of the descendants of Subedei). Yet others rose primarily due to their military merits and loyalty to the specific Emperor. There was, however, an additional group of the military elite, which united all of those channels of promotion in the military, namely the “self-made” military commanders who rose to power as members of the *keshig* or as personal retainers of the Khans, and were then awarded the right to become imperial in-laws of the Golden *urugh* (*güregens*) already under the Yuan. These people became of special importance mainly after the death of Qubilai Khan, and their promotions, their participation in the political intrigues of the court and their disappearance from the history were strongly dependent on their affiliation to different factions in the Yuan politics. If compared with the “old” in-laws or *nökers* of the Golden *urugh*, these people and their descendants formed the “new” military hereditary elites of the Yuan, who often controlled their own tribal armies and whose extraordinary rise in power starts with the very end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. This presentation will discuss one major case of such a “new” military elite, the Qipchaq lineage of Tuq Tuqa (d. 1297), who started rising in power in the late years of Qubilai’s reign, was became an overall commander of the newly established Qipchaq Guard in 1286 and was given a princess from the side line of the Golden *urugh* in 1288. His sons Chong’ur (d. 1322) and his grandson El Temür (d. 1333) belonged to the factions of the Emperors Wuzong and Wenzong. Especially El Temür possessed almost uncontrollable military and administrative power during Wenzong’s reign. During the period between 1297 and 1333, the clan of Tuq Temür continuously intermarried with the Golden *urugh* and increased the Qipchaq thousands under its private control. Following the death of El Temür, already under Hui-zong, his whole family was executed and all its property was confiscated. The presentation will analyse the history of this family and show the reasons behind their rise and fall, as well as the importance of the different promotion channels for the establishment of the new military elite in the second half of the Yuan history.