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INNER ASIAN WISDOM TRADITIONS IN THE PRE-MONGOL PERIOD

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I. SOURCES.

OUR KNOWLEDGE OF INNER ASIAN WISDOM TRADITIONS before the thirteenth century is scanty indeed. Indigenous sources may be reduced to four:

1. The Orkhon inscriptions, particularly the monuments of Kül-Tägin erected in 732 and of Tonyukuk erected some years earlier (Talât Tekin, 1968). Although it is clear that they reflect a tradition of royal wisdom, it is too early to judge whether this was indigenous or whether it depended on Chinese and/or Iranian models.
2. The Tun-huang and Turfan manuscript fragments. These are of uncertain provenance and date, though they probably belong to the tenth century. The fragments in runic script were originally published by Thomsen (1912: 215-217) and were recently re-edited by Hamilton and Bazin (1972). The Uighur fragment, consisting of thirteen proverbs actually labeled *türk savi* ("Turkic proverb"), was published by Arat (1936: 53ff; 1965: 272-275).
3. The *Dīwān Luġāt at-Turk* of Maḥmūd al-Kāšġarī. The final redaction of this encyclopedic dictionary, modeled after the Arabic lexicons, was probably made in 1077. It makes clear that the Turks were in possession of a large stock of indigenous proverbs. Kāšġarī cites roughly 270 proverbs, several given in more than one variant; also numerous wisdom verses. The unique manuscript of the *Dīwān* was published in facsimile (Kāšġarī 1941), and is cited below as DLT plus page number (according to that edition) and entry word. (See the forthcoming *Compendium of the Turkic*

Dialects, ed. and tr. R. Dankoff in collaboration with J. Kelly.) The proverbs were collected by Brockelmann (1920; see also Hommel, 1923) and Birtek (1944); the wisdom verses again by Brockelmann (1924: 34-44). 4. The *Qutaḡgu Bilig* by Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib, of Balasagun, written in 1069-70. This is a long didactic poem in the "Mirror-for-Princes" genre which combines Turkic Inner Asian with Arabo-Persian Islamic traditions. The text is cited below as KB plus line number according to the critical edition of Arat (Yūsuf, 1947). The shorter and later (thirteenth century?) work entitled *Atebetü'l-hakayk* (Yükneki, 1951) is wholly within the Islamic-Iranian framework and so is not considered here, although it does furnish illustrations of the process of transforming proverbs into verses, discussed below (e.g. line 328; cf. DLT 514 *qān*, 554 *yu*-).

Finally we should mention non-indigenous sources. Both the Chinese and the Arabs tended to belittle the cultural traditions of the Inner Asian peoples, with only occasional and reluctant admission of their sagacity. In the early years of the seventh century, the counsellor P'ei-kü advised the emperor that the Turks were really simple and uncomplicated people, and it would be easy to control them, were it not for the presence among them of malicious and cunning Sogdians who acted as their instructors and guides (Liu, 1958: I, 87; cf. I, 194). The *T'ang-shu* provides a portrait of the wise Tonyukuk (Liu, 1958: I, 171 ff.) which nicely parallels the self-portrait in his monument (see below). The ninth century Arab writer al-Jāḥiẓ, in the course of an encomium on the Turks, quotes a contemporary of his as saying: "And if in their part of the world there had been prophets and wise men in their country, and they had happened to think of such things and had had leisure to attend to them, they would have made you forget the learning of Baṣra and the wisdom of Greece and the industry of China" (Walker, 1915: 676). Despite the implication, at least one Turkic wisdom tradition did enter the mainstream of Arab belles-lettres (Dankoff, 1977).

II. CONTENTS.

A. ROYAL INSTRUCTION. Although the main functions of the Orkhon inscriptions are commemorative and propagandistic, they may be considered "wisdom literature" insofar as these functions are carried out through the technique of royal instruction. This is clearest in the first part (south side) of the Kül-Tägin monument. The ruler, Bilgä Khağan, harangues the people, reminding them first of his conquests, and second of his having saved them from the ignominy of Chinese subjection. He lays great stress on the idea that the legitimacy and the power of his rule are bound up with its being centered in the Ötükan (i.e. probably the Tannu Ola) range (KT S 3, 8). And in particular he cites what sounds like a hoary maxim: "The land from which to govern the realm is the mountain stronghold of Ötükan" (KT S 4: *el tutsiq yer ötükan yiş ärmış*). This agrees with what the *Chou-shu* tells us of the Turk Khağan, that he always dwelt on the mountain Tu-kin-shan (Liu, 1958: I, 10); but it also agrees with Tonyukuk's policy of Turk self-government and rebellion against the Chinese (Ton S 10). We unfortunately know too little about the religious and strategic significance of Ötükan to judge whether the above maxim indeed reflects an age(s)-old tradition of royal wisdom (cf. Gabain, 1949; Czegledi, 1962).

Then, while warning against the seductions of the Chinese, Bilgä Khağan contrasts the unwise instruction of "an evil man" who counseled the people to associate with the Chinese, and his own good instruction to keep their distance. The evil saying is: "If you are distant they give bad silks, if you are near they give good silks" (KT S 7). His own admonition is: "When you are hungry you do not recall being full, and once you are full you do not recall being hungry" (KT S 8). Both counsels are couched in the parallel and contrastive form typical of Turkic wisdom sayings:

iraq ärsär yavlaq ağı berür
yağaq ärsär ädgü ağı berür
ačsiq tosiq ömüz sän
bir todsar ačsiq ömüz sän

It is significant that the same title of Bilgä, meaning "sage," is adopted by the Khağan and by the royal counsellor Tonyukuk. The latter quotes what must be considered the earliest attested Turkic proverbs. The first occurs while Tonyukuk is wondering whether or not to make Elterish the Khağan: "If you try to distinguish from a distance between a lean bull and a fat bull, you cannot say whether it is a fat bull or a lean

bull" (Ton W 5-6). The second relates more clearly to its context, in which Tonyukuk is trying to convince the Khağan to attack his enemies separately before they have the opportunity to form an alliance: "What is thin is easy to bend and what is weak is easy to break; if thin becomes thick it is hard to bend and if weak becomes tough it is hard to break" (Ton S 6-7). The same notion lies behind the single-arrow versus joined-arrows motif in the later Chinggis Khan and Oğuz Khan traditions.

B. PROVERBS. Concerning the early Turkic proverbs, there is remarkable uniformity between the few Tun-huang and Turfan examples on the one hand, and the rich collection provided by al-Kāšgarī on the other. We may illustrate this by two examples, beginning with a pair of closely related proverbs in the *Dīwān*:

DLT 470 yaz-:

yazmäs atim bolmäs "There is no marks-
yañilmäs bilgä bolmäs man who does not
miss, there is no sage
who does not err."

610 yañqu:

yazmäs atim yağmur "The marksman that does
yañilmäs bilgä yañqu not miss is rain, the
sage that does not err
is echo."

Now, the best preserved of the Tun-huang fragments contains a series of five proverbs with the verbs *az-ma*- "not to stray" (always connected with *yerči* "guide") and *yañil-ma*- "not to err" (always with *bilgä* "sage" or *bitkäči* "scribe"). The one which is closest in sense to the above pair is (Hamilton-Bazin, 1972: 37):

(yañi) lma(z b)itkäči yoq "There is no scribe
a(zmaz yerči) yoq who does not err,
there is no guide who
does not stray."

Although the use of *yaz-* rather than *az-* in the former examples furnishes the typical initial rhyme, it would be wrong to conclude that these are "better" or "more original" in terms of the oral tradition as a whole. One of the oracle texts provides another example of *az-* and *yañil-* together (Arat, 1965: 286):

yol azsar äv tapmaz "If you stray from the
kiši yañilsar iş bütmüz road you won't find

the house, if a man
errs his job won't get
done."

And Kāšgarī furnishes an example of *az-* parallel to *yaz-*:

DLT 58 ula:

ula bolsa yöl azmās "If there is a waymark
bilig bolsa sōz yzmās you won't lose the way, if
there is wisdom you won't
err in speech."

Our second example may also serve to illustrate the "state of the art" with regard to reconstructing the oral tradition. Hamilton and Bazin (1972: 34) were confronted with the following fragment:

.....(S)LN : TUT
.....(g)ü : TUTmz ::

They compared this with the following proverb in the *Dīwān*:

DLT 622 arslān:

alīn arslān tutār "By trickery you can cap-
küēin sičgān tutmās ture a lion, by force you
can't capture a mouse."

They then reconstructed the above fragment as follows:

alīn arslan tutar (same meaning)
küēin küsgü tutmaz

Although this reconstruction is unexceptional so far as it goes (*küsgü* being a synonym of *sičgān*), three further matters ought to have been pointed out. First, Kāšgarī himself cites two other variants of the same proverb, both with a word meaning "scarecrow" instead of "mouse" (DLT 410-411 *kösgük*; 53 *āl* — here with *oyuq*, the Oğuz dialectical equivalent of *kösgük*). Second, Kāšgarī also cites two other proverbs dealing with a lion and a mouse:

DLT 50 alim, 206 bērim:

alimči arslān "The creditor is a lion,
bērimči sičgān the debtor is a mouse."
560 qari-:
arslān qarīsa sičgān ütīn "When the lion grows old
köqāzūr he watches the mouse's
hole."

Based on these first two points we may surmise that the "original" proverb had *sičgān*, that this was replaced by *küsgü*, and that this in turn was replaced by *kösgük* and then, among the Oğuz, by the equivalent of the latter, *oyuq*. Third, Hommel (1923: 185) had suggested virtually the same reconstruction (but with *kälägü* "gerboa" instead of *küsgü*) fifty years before Hamilton-Bazin.

It has often been pointed out that the typical qualities of primitive Turkic verse — assonance, syntactic parallelism, initial rhyme, etc. — are also characteristic of Turkic proverbs, riddles, oracular sayings, and the like; and the conclusion has been drawn that verse has its origin in these other kinds of highly charged speech (Gandjei, 1957; Gabain, 1963: 208 ff.; Şinasi Tekin, 1965: 59 ff.). In the *Dīwān* we can, as it were, see the process at work; for there we find four examples of wisdom verses embodying proverbs which are also cited independently. Here we give the proverb first, followed by the verse:

1. DLT 224 taqāgu:

yazidaqi süwlīn eđürgāli "When you go out to
āwdāki taqāgu ičgīnma hunt pheasants in the
field, don't let the hens in
the house escape."

449 yawaš:

qoldaš bilä yarašgīl "When you make a friend
qaršip adīn üdürmä show deference to him,
bäk tuŷ yawaš taqāgu do not oppose him or
süwlīn yazīn eđärmä choose another over him;
hold fast to the hens in
your house, don't go after
pheasants in the field and
let the hens get away."

2. 112 atit-:

tāy atitsa at tinūr "When the colt is reck-
oğul ärädsä ata tinūr oned a horse, the horse
rests; when the boy is
counted among the men,
the father rests."

112 tāy, 514 tāy:

tägür mänig säwimi "Convey my words and
bilgäläkä āy say to the sages, that the
tinur qali atitsa mare rests when her colt
qisraq sani tāy is counted among the
horses."

3. 59 ümä:

ümä kälsä qut kälir "When a guest comes,
good luck comes."

- 55 oyuq, 193 qonuq:
bardi ärän qonuq "Gone are those who
körüp qutqa saqār when they saw a guest,
qaldi yawuz oyuuq reckoned him as good
körüp äwni yiqār luck; left are the evil ones
 who when they see a scare-
 crow, tear down the tent."
4. 46 anuq, 278 san-:
anuq utru tutsa yōqqa "If one offers the guest
sanmās what is available,
 hospitality is not reck-
 oned as nought."
- 59 ümä:
kälsä qali yarlıg bolup "When a guest comes
yunçig ümä tattered and distressed,
käldür anuq bolmıš aşıg offer what food is avail-
tutma um-a able, don't keep him
 waiting and hoping."

The tendentious quality of such verses is clear in the second example above ("Convey my proverb to the sages and say . . ."), as also in the following:

- DLT 221 talqān:
oğlum ögüt alğil "My son, take my counsel
biligsizlik ketār and drive off ignorance,
talqān kimnig bolsa añar for he who has barley
bākmās qatār gruel mixes it with syrup
 (and similarly, he who
 has intelligence will
 accept advice)."
- 211 qardu:
qarduni yinçü saqınmāñ "Consider not ice grains
tuzğuni mançu sezinmāñ as pearls, consider not a
bulmaduq nāñkū säwinmāñ gift of food as a wage,
bilğälār ani yērār rejoice not at what you
 have not found — at all
 these the sages scoff."
- 464 yüksäk:
üs äs körüp yüksäk "When the vulture sees
qaliq qōđi çoqār prey he swoops down
bilğä kiši ögüt berip from high in the air; when
tawraq uqār the wise man is given
 counsel he understands it
 immediately."

The practice of composing such verses must have been widespread. It is presupposed in the *Kutađgu Bilig* (see below).

The large majority of the proverbs in the *Dīrwān* embody what may be called "standard wisdom," often couching a homely truth in an image from nature or

daily life (e.g., DLT 271 *tuğ-*: *müš oğli muyāvu tuğār* "The kitten is born miaowing," coined about a son who takes after his father), and counseling the virtues of modesty, generosity, patience, respect for elders, etc. It is noteworthy that the wisdom verses illustrate this standard wisdom exclusively. More interesting are those proverbs which reflect the lore and customs of the Inner Asian Turks. Elsewhere I have gathered those proverbs pertaining to tribal and kinship organization and to beliefs and superstitions (Dankoff, 1972; 1975). Related to the latter are sayings involving such originally alien culture terms as *suburgān* and *toyin* (cf., Dankoff, 1975: 69):

- DLT 257 suburgān:
suburgānda äv bolmās "There is no house for
topurgānda aw bolmās a dwelling among old
 tombs, there is no
 game for hunting on
 bare ground."
- 140 ağri, 519 toyin:
bīr toyin baši ağrīsa "If one priest has a
qamuğ toyin baši ağrīmās headache, not all
 priests have head-
 aches."

- 608 täñri:
toyin tapuğsāq "The priest is worship-
täñri säwinçsiz ful, but God is not
 pleased with his devo-
 tion."

Several proverbs reflect the relations of the Turks with the Chinese and the Iranians:

- DLT 215 torqu:
tawğāç xānnig torqusi tälīm "The Khāqān of China
täñlämäđip biçmās has much silk but he
 measures it out before
 cutting" (advises modera-
 tion and thrift).
- 176 bōrk, 407 tat:
tatsiz türk bolmās "No Turk without a Per-
bašsiz bōrk bolmās sian, no cap without a
 head."
- 406 tat:
tatiğ kōzrā tikānig tüprä "(Strike) the Persian on
 the eye, (cut) the thorn at
 the root."
- 407 tat:
qiliç tatiqsa tış yunçir "When the sword gets
är tatiqsa ät tinçir rusty the warrior's condi-

tion suffers, when a Turk assumes the morals of a Persian his flesh begins to stink."

Another group transmits lore regarding the nomadic habits, the medicinal practices, the flora and fauna and terrain of the Inner Asian peoples:

DLT 164 quz:

*quzda qār ägsümās
qōyda yāğ ägsümās*

"The shaded slope lacks not for snow, sheep lack not for fat."

234 qišlāğ:

*ōz kōz
īr qišlāğ*

"Oneself (or, the valley?) is the eye, the sunny slope is the winter quarter."¹

39 ägir:

ägir bolsa är ölmās

"If a man has galingale he won't die."

70 aņduz

aņduz bolsa at ölmās

"If there is elecampane the horse won't die."

179 söğüt, 502 sōl, 510 qās, 605 qađıñ:

*söğüt sōliñä
qađıñ qāsıñä*

"The willow for its sap, the birch for its bark."

458 yalğa:

*qara mūñ kälmişinčä
qara yalğa kächmä*

"As long as black misfortune, does not come, do not cross Qara Yalğa [an inaccessible pass between Farghana and the Turk country]."

220-1 qazgān:

*quš yawuzi sağızgān
yigāč yawuzi azgān
yēr yawuzi qazgān
bodun yawuzi barsgān*

"The worst bird is the magpie, the worst tree is the Azgān, the worst land is the eroded, the worst people are those of Barsgān."

Finally, there is a group of proverbs which illustrate the royal-wisdom tradition. One of those can be related to the tradition only tangentially, and because Kāšgarī connects it with an anecdote that must have been current in Karakhanid court circles:

DLT 238 qisrāq:

*qız birlä küräšmä
qisrāq birlä yarišma*

"Do not wrestle with a virgin. Do not race against a young mare."

"This," says Kāšgarī, "is one of the proverbs of the Khāqāniyya which pertain to the wedding night of Sultan Mas^cūd, when she tripped him with her foot." (For the historical background, see Barthold, 1968: 279-80). It is an example of what Boratav calls "les expressions proverbiales dont on explique l'origine par une anecdote à laquelle elles font allusion" (Boratav, 1964: 69; for another example see DLT 342 *süčün*-).

More significant are those having to do with *beg* "chief" and *ēl* "realm, the territory under a Beg's control":

DLT 234-5 basruq:

*yēr basruqi tāğ
bođün basruqi bēğ*

"The counterweights of the earth are the mountains, of the people, the chiefs." [See Dankoff, 1972: 26.]

453 yarin:

*yarin bulğansa
el bulğanūr*

"If the shoulderblade is beclouded, the realm will be disturbed." [See Dankoff, 1975: 73.]

276 qal- 542 törü:

*ēl qalir
törü qalmās*

"The realm may be left behind, but custom may not be left behind."

273 čiq-, 494 kūč:

*kūč ēldin kirsä
törü tüñlüktin čiqār*

"When violence (or injustice) comes in by the courtyard, custom (or law, justice) goes out by the window."

C. KEY TERMS. We may use the last two proverbs cited above as the point of departure for a discussion of *ēl* and its relation with *tōr* and *törü*. These are key terms in the Turkic/Inner Asian political tradition, as illustrated particularly in the Orkhon inscriptions and in *Qutadğū Bilig*. The first point of significance is the semantic spread of the word *ēl*. There are four distinct meanings (cf. DLT 36):

1. courtyard;
2. vile or ignoble (as in *ēl quš* "vulture," lit. "ignoble bird");
3. realm or province (Ar. *walāya*; as in *beg ēli* "the Beg's realm"; also *ēl baši* "head of the realm" and secondarily "groom for horses";
4. peace.

As a hypothesis we may take "courtyard" as the core meaning from which the others developed by regular semantic transfer. If we picture in our minds the tent or

yurt of an Inner Asian chieftain, *ēl* is the area before the entrance. In the above proverb it is contrasted with *tūñlük*, originally the smokehole at the top of the dwelling. In *Qutađǵu Bilig* we find *ēl* contrasted rather with *tōr* “seat of honor,” the area within the dwelling which is opposite the entrance and near the fireplace. KB 2253: “Two things increase the fame of Begs: their banner in the courtyard (*ēl*) and their feast-table in the place of honor (*tōr*).” 262-3: “If a fool has a seat in the place of honor (*tōr*) that place is reckoned the courtyard (*ēl*), while if a wise man has a seat in the courtyard then the courtyard is far ahead of the place of honor.” 844 (citing the Chief of Ili): “He who knows how to serve will attain the place of honor (*tōr*); he who does not know will be thrown out of the place of honor into the courtyard (*ēl*).” (Cf. also 614-5.) It is clear that *tōr* is the noble part of the chieftain’s dwelling, while *ēl* is the ignoble part. This explains the second meaning of *ēl* above. But it is also clear that *ēl*, the courtyard, symbolizes the entire area under the chieftain’s authority. The Beg has not only to entertain the nobles in the place of honor; he has also to maintain his banner in the courtyard. He has to maintain control over all his subjects (just as a groom maintains control over the horses in his charge— cf. Ar. *siyāsa* “managing a horse; administering a country”). The realm or empire that is under the firm authority of the ruler is a *Pax*. Hence the third and fourth meanings of *ēl* above.

As a second hypothesis, we may assume that *tōr* “seat of honor” fell together in some contexts with *törü* “custom, rule, justice” (Ar. *rasm*, *inşāf* in DLT).² If the courtyard symbolized the territory under the ruler’s command, the seat of honor symbolized the command itself, the law and order provided by the ruler’s authority or, more narrowly, the custom and protocol of his court (e.g. KB 3997 ff.). A phrase such as KT E 3 *ēlig tutup törüg etmiş* originally could have signified “He captured the outer court or courtyard (*ēl*, metaphor for the land) and organized the inner court or place of honor (*tōr*, metaphor for the government).” Then *tör-üg* could have been analyzed as *törü-g*. By the time of the Orkhon inscriptions, however, it is clear that the word parallel to *ēl* was *törü*, not *tōr*, for the political organization of a country. In the Kül-Tägin inscription, for example, *ēl* and *törü* are used synonymously (object of the verbs *ičgn-* and *qazǵan-*: KT E 6, 13; 9, 30), or else are used together as a paired expression or hendiadys (KT E 1, 8, 22, 31). A like usage is found in a verse in the *Dīwān*: *ēl törü ētilsün* (so read), translated “that the realm (Ar. *walāya*) may prosper” (DLT 66 *āndkik*). Alongside this usage, however, we find *ēl* and *törü* contrasted, as in the proverb cited above (*ēl qalir*

törü qalmās). This is the normal situation in *Qutađǵu Bilig*, where *törü* is a synonym of *könilik* meaning “justice” (e.g. KB 355, 800) and is opposed to *küč* “injustice” (e.g. 3121, 3206-7, 5576). Thus, the ideal ruler “wielding the sword lops off the neck of his foe, and with law and justice (*törü*) governs his realm and his people (*eli bođni*)” (KT 286; cf. 2015, 2034, etc.). Furthermore, the contrast *ēl:törü* allows Yūsuf to make plays on words between *törü* and *tōr*:

KB 2196:

törülüg kiši boldi el “The statesman is head of
tör baši both the courtyard (or
realm) and the seat of
honor (or court proper).”

830:

qayu elkä tegsä mäniñ “Over whatever land my
bu törüm justice extends, that land
ol el barča etlür taš prospers, though it be
ersä qorum stones and rock.”

4604:

törü bilsä yalñuq bulur “If a man knows proper
tör baši protocol he attains the
head of the place of
honor.”

D. AUTHORITIES. Islamic mirrors for princes leaned heavily on the citation of authorities which added prestige to the wisdom imparted. These authorities included Muslim prophets and saints, Greek sages, Iranian rulers and princes, etc. (cf. Bagley, 1964: lvi-lxxiv).

Yūsuf, the author of *Qutađǵu Bilig*, took as his starting point the Islamic-Iranian ideals of statecraft and of ethics which he found in Arabic (and perhaps also Persian) literature. But his aim was to make a new home for these ideals as part of an Inner Asian Turkic literary heritage. Stated otherwise, he aimed to establish a Turkic wisdom tradition alongside the Arab and the Iranian traditions within the larger frame of Islamic culture. The way he accomplished this may be illustrated in the following example. The king has sent his chief advisor on a mission to summon a certain holy man to the court. The latter refuses, saying that he has renounced the world and also that he is ignorant of royal protocol. He gives the advisor a written and an oral message to this effect, and states: “A messenger’s job is only to deliver the message and wait for an answer; you have heard my answer, now convey it . . .” (KB 3814). Now any Muslim hearing this line would immediately think of the Koranic verse (5:92/3, 99): “It is only for the Messenger to deliver the Message.”³ But

the holy man, instead of citing the Koran, continues as follows:

The Khan of the Three Camps has said, There is no fault in the messenger so long as he does not mince his words but delivers the message whole as it was entrusted to him. And the Khan of the Turks has put it even better: Do not punish the messenger for the message; he deserves neither punishment nor death so long as he truly reports what he heard; rather a messenger, as the ambassador of peace (*elči*), is inviolable, and if he transmits the message that was entrusted him, then praise and reward are his due.

Let us glance at a list of the cited authorities from the Turkic/Inner Asian background:

Üç (Uç?) Ordu Khani 2966, 3815, 5569
 Üç (Uç?) Ordu Begi 1594
 Türk Khani 3817
 Khaqan 3126
 Türk Buyruqi 1163
 Ögä Buyruqi 2941
 Čigil 3491
 Kök Ayuq 2644
 Bökä Yavğusi 5043, 5523
 İla Atlığı 841, 1629, 2319
 İla İrkini 4752
 İla Sir Teñi 2696
 İla Begi 1779
 Ötükän Begi 1962, 2682
 Yağma Begi 1758, 4947
 Toğa Alp Er 5861

Only the last of these can be related to a Turkic historical or legendary tradition (cf. KB 277; DLT 33 *alp*, 509 *qāz*). The rest are apparently simply titles (cf. KB 4067-9), sometimes attached to geographical or tribal names. One also finds compounds with Beg which are not attached to a proper name:

Beglär Begi "the Beg of Beks" 893
Bođun Begi "the Beg of the people" 6138
El Känd Begi "the Beg of the realm and the city" 216
Uluğ Känd Begi "the Beg of the great city" 5354

Similarly, there are general titles or offices, such as *Bođun Baščisi* ("Chief of the People"), *Elči Beg*, and the like. Finally, two cited authorities from outside the Turkic sphere (note also the appeal to Nūshīn Ravān, KB 290):

Tažik Bilgäsi "the Iranian sage" 3265
Sartlar Baši "Chief of the merchants" 2745, 3002, 5754

There is no discernible pattern to the citing of these authorities. The wisdom attributed to any one is usually of such a vague or general nature that it could just as well be attributed to any other, or to the standard "wise sage," who is in fact cited the most often (see below). There is also little if anything to distinguish the wisdom attributed to the above authorities from that embodied in what are called "proverbs" (*maşal*, *kički söz*: 110, 1623, 3514), "Turkic proverbs" (*türkčä maşal*: 273, 319, 880, 1798, 1826), or "Arabic sayings" (*tazi tili*: 5809). The same holds true for the scattered quatrains attributed to various anonymous poets. Except for their proverb-like character, and their peculiar rhyme-scheme, there are no other characteristics which distinguish them from the surrounding text. The reason is clear. All of this material — proverbs, quatrains, and wisdom-sayings alike — was composed by Yūsuf himself, using the Islamic-Iranian wisdom and ethics tradition as his model. This does not mean that he did not also draw on a living Turkic/Inner Asian tradition; although in the one case where this is demonstrable, it is also likely that his access to that tradition was through the medium of Arabic literature (Dankoff, 1977).

E. "WISDOM." A final matter to be discussed is the term *bilig*. It is comparable to Ar. *ḥikma* in that it means both "wisdom" (cf. Pers. *khirad*) and "wise sayings" (cf. Pers. *andarz*). The title of *Qutadğū Bilig* means "the wisdom that conduces to royal glory" (*qut* meaning "fortune" or "the charisma of rule," corresponding to Pers. *farr*; see Bombaci, 1965-1966). We find the doctrine that wisdom (*bilig*) is learned while intellect (*uquş*) is innate (KB 1824 ff.) Through plays on words wisdom (*bilig*) is connected with the removal of illness (*ig*: KB 156) and also with the rule of the prince (*beg*: KB 1953). The wise sage (*büğü*, *bilgä*, *biliglig*, *uquşluğ*) who hands down wise sayings (*söz*: 292 f, 1048, 3383, 3594, 4135, 4177, 5142, 5980; *sav*: 973, 1807; *bilig*: see below) is assimilated to the ruler who hands down law and royal custom (*törü*: 269, 4446-51). Both *bilig* and *törü* are embodied in words, which constitute a legacy that the sage or the ruler lays down, and that is then passed on (*qumaru* "legacy": 270, 1341 f.; cf. DLT 634 *qōd*-). To impart counsel in the form of a maxim or wise saying is "to give wisdom" (*bilig ber*:- KB 778, 1727, 2617, 3382, 3670, 3687, 4240, 4691, 5084, 5171, 5419, 6081, 6448). The term *bilig* is found in hendiadys with *söz* (4221) and *ḥikmat* (2698). Occasionally the word is personified and it is *bilig* itself which utters the maxim (1673: *te*-; 4075, 4451: *ay*-; 1385, 5076, 5606: *sözlä*-; cf. 904, 1728, 1844 where *uquş*

"intellect" utters the maxim). The plural *biliglär* is only found in the verse prologue which dates to a century or so after the original text:

KB VP 10-11:

büzänmiş ağırliğ "It is adorned with wise
biliglär bilä . . . sayings most precious, . . .
qamuğ barçasına words of the sages for one
bügülär sözi . . . and all. . ."

III. CONCLUSION.

The foregoing survey should suffice to establish two points: that there was a strong indigenous wisdom tradition among the Inner Asian Turks; and that a main component of this tradition was royal, or political, wisdom. We have dwelt here on certain terms — *bilig*, *bilgä*, *äl*, *törü* — whose semantic spread and mutual interrelations illustrate these points clearly. Other words that could be studied from this point of view are *ärdäm* "virtue" and the derivatives of *ö-* "to understand" (*ög* "intellect; mature (of an animal); mother," *ögä* "mature (of a man); counsellor (title)," *ögüt* "advice," *ögrän-* "to learn," *ögräyük* "custom"). The question of (mutual?) influence between the Inner Asian and the Chinese and/or Iranian wisdom traditions is left open. Finally, we need studies of the relations between the pre-Mongol and post-Mongol materials, particularly in connection with the *biligs* and *yasas* of Chinggis Khan and his descendants; the inculcation of traditional wisdom illustrated in such texts as the *Secret History of the Mongols* and the *Book of Dede Korkut*; and the vast storehouse of proverbs extant in oral tradition among the Turkic and Mongol peoples.

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¹ Exact meaning uncertain. Note Kāšgarī's interpretation: "If a man does his own job and does not entrust it to someone else he is like one who takes as his lot the winter quarter on the sunny slope of the mountain, for that side keeps green longer and has less snow in winter." Cf. (?) KB 6577 *özkä köz täg*; also the proverb (Arat, 1965: 274): *tağda öz yoq say yazıda bel yoq* "No valley on the mountain, no slope on the plain."

² Less likely, *törü* is a secondary form of *tör*. In the *Dīwān* we find another secondary form, *törä* (DLT 542). From Kāšgarī's example, *törä yoqlādi* "He assumed the seat of honor," and from the fact that *yoqla-* like *ağ-*, meaning "to ascend," requires the dative (e.g. DLT 537 *-qa*, KB 1002, 1661), this must have been originally **tör-ä* with the rare dative in *-ä* (or possibly **tör-rä* with the directional suffix *-rä*). On *törä* in post-Mongol Turkic texts see Clauson 1972: 528-9, 531-2.

³ Nizam al-Mulk, in a similar context (1960: 98) quotes Koran 24: 54/3: "The messenger has only to convey the message plainly."