

PART ONE

**HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE IN MONGOLIA
IN ANCIENT TIMES AND
IN THE PERIOD OF THE MONGOLIAN EMPIRE
(UNTIL THE END OF THE 14th CENTURY)**

CHAPTER ONE

THE BIRTH OF MONGOLIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

**I. Preconditions for the Appearance of
Written History Among the Mongols**

The Sources of Mongolian Historical Knowledge

There is no doubt that oral historical works developed independently among the nomadic peoples who inhabited the ancient territory of Mongolia. There is also no doubt that Mongolian historical knowledge was linked with oral traditions not only of the Mongols themselves, but of their predecessors who had dwelt in Mongolia and played an important role in its social-economic, political and cultural history. But we know very little about how, in what forms and in what way the transmission of cultural achievements took place, and how they were appropriated by the Mongols.

It is well-known that among the nomadic tribes and peoples of antiquity and of the early Mongolian middle-ages various types of legends, native traditions and tales were widely distributed, in one way or another reflecting the historical world-view of the nomads.

As Professor Owen Lattimore observed, the earliest known epic account of Modun current among the Hsiung-nu was recorded by Ssu-ma Ch'ien in his *Shih-chi*. Lattimore summarizes the story as follows:

Modun was placed as a hostage among the Yüeh-chih by his father, Tumen, who wished to get rid of him in favor of another heir. Tumen then suddenly attacked the Yüeh-chih, expecting that they would kill Modun, but Modun took one of the best Yüeh-chih horses and escaped back to the Hsiung-nu. Tumen received him as a hero and gave him command of ten thousand horsemen. Modun trained these followers to obey the signal of a "whistling arrow," putting to death those who failed to draw on any target at which he had aimed such a signal ar-

row. After exercising them in this procedure, during a subsequent hunt he shot at his own favorite horse, and put to death those who did not follow the signal. He then tested them again, but more severely, loosing an arrow against one of his favorite wives, and again killed those who did not obey the signal. Again while hunting, he shot a "whistling arrow" at a fine horse of his father. All of his followers answered the signal. Judging them now sufficiently disciplined, Modun at last went hunting together with his father. During the hunt, he drew his bow against Tumen: His followers did the same, making them all guilty, and leaving Modun free to seize tribal power (entry 307, pp. 463-464).

There is another heroic account of the Hsiung-nu, also quoted by Lattimore:

There followed a war of tribal supremacy. The Tung-hu demanded of Modun a horse of the Hsiung-nu that had been famous in Tumen's time. Against the advice of his lieutenants Modun surrendered the horse. Thinking he feared them, the Tung-hu then demanded from Modun one of his wives. Modun surrendered her, still against the word of his lieutenants. Finally, the Tung-hu claimed a stretch of land that lay between their borders and those of the Hsiung-nu. Modun consulted his advisers, who said that it did not matter whether he gave up the land or not. This time Modun was angered. Saying, "Land is the root of a nation; how can we cede it?" He put to death all those who had advised him to yield. Moreover, he followed this up by attacking the Tung-hu before he could be attacked (entry 307, p. 464).

Concerning these accounts, Lattimore rightly pointed out that "all of this recital is notably different from the chronicles of Chinese history, not only in detail, which is to be expected, but in style." He goes on to say: "Though somewhat modified by translation and by the terse wording of Chinese literary composition, it echoes, I think, an original account current among the Hsiung-nu themselves in epic or saga-like form. Even as it stands, it is clearly more akin to such nomad [p. 465] history in legendary form as the older (pre-Chingghis) material in the *Secret History of the Mongols* than it is of the conventions of Chinese historical writing" (entry 307, pp. 464-465).

It is known, for instance, that the T'o-pa tribe had at its disposition a heritage of writing history which has left its traces in Chinese sources. The Mongolian historian G. Sukhbaatar is right when he asserts that the genealogy of the T'o-pa khagans, cited in the *Wei-shu* [History of (ruling) the Wei Dynasty] is quite reminiscent of the genealogy

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of the ancestors of Chinggis Khan in the *Niyūča tobčiyān* [The Secret History], and related not to the Chinese but to the T'o-pa historical tradition (entry 126, p. 19; cf. also entry 219, pp. 171-181).

As to the existence of historical traditional tales among the T'o-pa, there is a legend about their re-settlement, briefly transmitted in the *Wei-shu*. According to this legend, Khan Hsüan T'ui-yin resettled in the south and acquired a great lake more than a thousand *li* in circumference. "The region was dark, cauldron-shaped

and swampy. . . . When Khan Hsien Lin sat on his throne, a saint said to him, 'Since this remote and closed locality is not suitable for founding a capital, it will be necessary to remove further away.' Then the Khan, being of advanced years, conveyed the throne to his son Tse-fen. He removed to the south and founded the Huns in an ancient locality" (entry 126, p. 133).

The legend in question is interesting because it has much in common with legends about origin and resettlement of other nomadic peoples of Central Asia. Let us point out for example a Turkic legend about the origins of the Turks. According to this account, the ancestors of the Turks dwelt at the edge of a great swamp, until they were exterminated by the neighboring tribe. Only a ten-year old boy remained alive, and he was saved from starvation by a female wolf, who became his wife. Hiding from enemies who finally even slew the lad, the last representative of the annihilated tribe, the wolf-dam fled to the mountains of northern Kao-ch'ang, where she bore seven sons, the father of whom was the lad she had saved. One of these sons received the name Ashina, this being the name of the tribe founded by him. His brothers founded their own clans.

Later on Ashina became the leader of a new tribe. The number of clans later expanded to several hundred. One of the heirs of Ashina, Asyan-shad, led the descendants of the she-wolf from the Kao-ch'ang mountains and settled them on the Altai (Ch'in-shan), where they became subjects of the Juan-juan, acquiring and working iron for them. Here they took the tribal name of "Turk," which according to the legend, is connected with the local term for the Altai Mountains (entries 254, p. 40; 49, pp. 220-221; 158, pp. 103-4).

This legend in its turn reminds one of the old Mongolian legend about the origin of the clan to which the ancestors of Chinggis Khan belonged. It was stated [17]

by Rashīd al-Dīn in the form in which the Mongols related it to him. Let us cite it almost in its entirety:

Approximately two thousand years prior to the present [time], among a tribe called Mongol in ancient times, there occurred a clash with other Turkic tribes, ending in a conflict and war. There is a tale [conveyed from the words] of respected persons devoted to verity that other tribes defeated the Mongols and inflicted such a slaughter [amongst] them that no more than two men and two women remained [alive]. These two families, in fear of the enemy, fled to an inaccessible locality. Among these mountains were abundant grass and a steppe healthy [in climate]. The name of this place was Ergune-kun . . . and the names of those two persons were Nukuz and Kiyan. They and their descendants stayed long years in this place and multiplied. . . .

Among these mountains and forests this people multiplied and the area of ground occupied by them grew narrow and insufficient; then they conducted a council among themselves, as to what would be the best way and the path easiest of execution for them to emerge from this rough ravine and narrow mountain defile. And then they found [there] a place where formerly iron ore originated and where iron constantly melted. Having gathered everyone together, they readied much firewood and coal in the woods in entire cartloads, cut off the heads of sev-

enty bulls and horses; skinned the hides entirely from them and made [from them] blacksmiths' bellows. Then they placed in layers the firewood and coal at the foothills of this slope and so organized that spot that at one stroke with these seventy bellows they blew [fire under the firewood and coal] until that [mountainous] slope melted down. [As a result] from it they got an enormous [quantity] of iron and [along with it] also opened a passage. They all nomadized away and departed that narrow spot for the expanses of the steppe. . . .

Inasmuch as Dobun-Bayan, the husband of Alan-Goa, came from the Kiyan clan, and Alan-Goa from the Kuralas tribe, the genealogy of Chinggis Khan, as set forth above, goes back to them. In consequence of this, [the people] have not forgotten that mountain, the melting of iron in the blacksmithing operation, and in the clan of Chinggis Khan there exists the custom and rule that on that night which is the beginning of the New Year, they prepare blacksmith's bellows, forges and coal. They make glow

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some iron, and having put it on the anvil, beat it with a hammer and stretch it out [into a strip] in gratitude [for their release]" (entry 67, vol. 1, book 1, pp. 153-155).

The common nature of the basic topic lines of the legends cited above, their character and spirit of narration, evoke great interest. Unfortunately, the existing level of our knowledge makes it difficult to judge in what fashion the attainments of oral creation were conveyed from one tribe to another, finally reaching the Mongols. Undoubtedly, no small role is played here by such factors as identical life-style, a more or less common historical fate, and likewise the similar level of social-economic development. Under these conditions it would prove impossible for common features not to have developed, not only in the historiographic forms and content of the predecessors of the Mongols and the Mongols themselves, but also in the historical-political views and historiographic activity in general of the Mongols and their predecessors.

The direct basis and prerequisite for the rise of Mongolian written history is naturally the above oral tradition, which was engendered and developed amongst these Mongolian tribes. Its beginnings lie deep in the centuries before 1200, but it was fully put together at the beginning of the 13th century, and crowned the process of forming the Mongolian nationality and the creation of a unified Mongolian state.

It is the ancient historical traditions of the Mongols that Rashīd al-Dīn communicates. Precisely this tradition, which evolved in the pre-script period, is the nourishing soil in which Mongolian historiography grew up. The *Secret History* bears eloquent witness to this.

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As S. A. Kozin justly said, the greater introductory part of this monument is nothing other than the putting into writing of "the folkloric oral science of genealogy" (entry 57, p. 51).

Actually, the genealogical history of the ancestors of Chinggis Khan, beginning with Börte Chino, is reproduced in the *Secret History* in the form of tradi-

tional tales remaining as a national memory about the historical past. It is true that by the beginning of the 13th century many rather old tales, carefully preserved in popular memory, nonetheless became forgotten or were layered over by new ones which had arisen in connection with the stormy events of that epoch.

Sources bear witness to the fact that the historical traditions of the Mongols of the 13th century go back to the times of Dobun-Bayan and Alan-Goa, who in the opinion of Rashīd al-Dīn (entry 67, vol. 1, book 2, p. 8) lived at the beginning of the Abbasid caliphate (750-1258) and in the Samanid epoch (819-999), i.e., towards the 8th or 9th century. It must be noted that in the initial part of Rashīd al-Dīn's work he sets forth the genealogy of Chinggis Khan's forebears as does the *Secret History*, solely according to the old Mongolian traditionary tales.

The historical tradition lying at the base of the first written monuments is not marked by diversity of theme and is mainly centered about one and the same theme. This is explained by the fact that in the period when historiography arose among the Mongols, when the power of the khagans began to grow, the old historical tradition substantially changed. Everything linked with the historic past of conquered tribes was subject to forgetting, and the traditionary tales of the victors, on the contrary, were not only preserved, but even became the predominant recollection of all the Mongols united under the might of a powerful khagan.

This is well seen from the example of Chinggis Khan and his kinsmen. Since the rise of Mongolian historiography coincided with the formation of the state with Chinggis Khan at the head, it preserved only the genealogical tales about the founding ancestors of this state. The tales connected with the history of other Mongolian clans and tribes were pushed into the background and then forgotten. They kept only those which bore on events in the history of the Borjigid clan that gave Chinggis Khan to the Mongols. This is why there have come to us so few examples of oral

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historical creative works of the Mongols from those distant times, when these works were not yet fixed in written form and were transmitted orally from generation to generation. Nonetheless a representation of ancient Mongolian historical tradition was preserved in the sources. As an example we cite the legend quoted above about the origins of the Mongols, which is the oldest of all the traditionary tales known to us. This legend enables one to surmise how the ancient Mongols imagined their origins and the history of the royal line. The date cited by Rashīd al-Dīn for the beginning of Mongolian history is interesting. The legend he quotes speaks of events which took place 2,000 years before the author's lifetime, i.e., about 1,000 B.C. It is quite possible that in it are preserved echoes of real events connected with the history of ancient Mongolian settlement.

A second traditionary tale, one about the origin of Chinggis Khan's ancestors, dates to the beginning of the 13th century when oral reportage was still dominant, and forms the base of the written genealogical history of the Mongolian khagans. Its great popularity and authoritativeness is shown by the fact that it also served as the main source for foreign historians of that era, who wrote the history of the

Mongols, commonly at the command of their rulers. The genealogical line of Chinggis Khan's ancestors on the whole is presented identically in the *Secret History*, in the *Complete Collection of Histories* by Rashīd al-Dīn, as well as in the *Hu-lan Deb-ther* (The Red Annals) by Kun-dGa' rDo-rJe (= Gunga-Dorji), compiled in the Tshal Gung-thang monastery in Tibet (entries 90, 223). We shall return to this topic again below.

Judging by examples of popular oral creations of the early Mongols preserved in the sources, an epic genre, arisen in the depths of the popular mass mind, predominated. Oral creativity had richly developed the folk tales, legends, songs and poems linked with the lives and histories of these and other tribes and their brave leaders. Transmitted from generation to generation, these accounts were set forth in that oral-literary language, the existence of which in the pre-literate period was established by B. Vladimirtsov. One may find in written monuments not a few examples of this. Rashīd al-Dīn, for instance, informs us:

Qutula Khan, of the six sons of Qabul Khan, became the ruler. . . . The Mongolian poets heaped up many verses in praise of him and described his bravery and valor. They say that his voice was so mighty that his shout sounded across seven hills and was like an echo resounding from another mountain, and that the hands of his arms are like

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the paws of a bear; when he seized a man with both hands, no one was stronger or more powerful than he, and without [any] effort he would bend him in two like a wooden arrow, and break his back. Every meal he ate consisted of an [entire] big three-year old ram, and an enormous flagon of kumiss, and he was still not sated (entry 67, vol. 1, book 2, pp. 42-42).

In the extract cited, despite the fact that it comes to us in a Persian translation, it is not hard to detect an epic style typical of the early Mongols, in the way they sing about the strength and agility of the steppe *bayaturs* (knights), who are the chief heroes of the Mongolian epic.

As the sources testify, "The Mongols in ancient times customarily transmitted [orally] most messages in a rhythmic and allegorical speech" (*ibid.*, vol. 1, book 2, p. 117). This means of communication was called by the "oral writers" of the Mongols *da'un bari'ulhu* (lit. "to entrust to the voice"). Many messages, depending on their importance and the limited number of available literary forms, were memorized by the people. The "oral letter" also served to reproduce the historical past and to perpetuate the memory of outstanding personalities, famous particularly for their sharp-witted oratory and messages. For this reason one may say that such messages belong to a special genre of oral historiography created by the Mongols, that to a certain degree replaced written documents. It is no accident that the authors of such early sources as the *Secret History* or the *Complete Collection of Histories* regarded these as important historical documents, set forth in an oral form, and thus preserved for us many such messages. In demonstration of this we cite the message of Qadan-taishi to his opponent Toqtai:

Inform Toqtaï that when two fighting rams clash with one another, they do not uncouple until one of them is wounded and beaten, and if they go at it anew [later], then they clash with their horns, until one of them is wounded, and your position is specifically this: Do you wish to take revenge for your father, or what are you able to do? At my left flank is [my] elder brother-bayatur named Qutulakaân, from the land of Gurkutas, the abode of marvels; in comparison with the strength of his voice, the echo from those

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high mountains seems weak; and the paws of a three-year old bear are weaker than the strength of his hands; from the swiftness of his assault, the water of three rivers begins to create waves; and from a wound [suffered] from his blow, the children of three mothers begin to cry. And at my left flank there is an in-law [quda] by the name of Arig-cine; when he goes hunting in dense woods, he seizes a gray wolf by the paw and smashes him to earth; he gnaws off the head and paws of a leopard, staves in the head of and fractures the neck of a tiger. . . In the center of my forces there is a [fellow] named Qadan-taishi; his hands never fail to hit the mark, and his feet never stumble, if he assaults a mountain or slope. When we three get together, we'll toss him [Toqtaï] out of his lands and camp-grounds, and deprive him of his household staff and menials. Now, although [my] speech has been drawn out, nonetheless [I add the following]: they have dispatched you, ladies, as messengers because you are the most sharp-witted and renowned [persons] of the entire nation. You must not forget these words and repeat [them to those who sent you] (ibid., vol. 1, book 2, p. 39).

Many similar oral messages can be found in the *Secret History*. Such were exchanged by Chinggis Khan with Jamuqa, the Kereit Wang Khan, Dayan Khan of the Naiman, and others. From such messages one may form judgments about the interrelations of Mongolian tribes, about important events in their lives, etc. As example we may call on the message of Chinggis Khan to Wang Khan of the Kereits, as quoted in the *Secret History* and in the *Complete Collection of Histories* (see entries 57, §177; 67, vol. 1, book 2, pp. 127-129). It is correct that the sources transmit some details in different ways, but on the whole they are identical. In this "oral letter," Chinggis requests the leader of the Kereits to clarify the reason the latter has cancelled their union as sworn brothers (*anda*). The message contains valuable information about the internecine conflicts frequently placing Wang Khan in a critical position, from which he was extricated solely thanks to Chinggis's father and Chinggis himself (entry 57, §169).

From what has been set forth it is evident that during their pre-literate period the Mongols had at their disposal a rich oral historiography and a well-developed oral literary language. This also served as the foundation on which the written history of the Mongols was put together and grew.

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But written history in a nomadic world first arose not at the time of the Mongols, but long before their appearance on the world arena. The earliest traces of historiographic activity on Mongolian territory were laid down by the Turks and

Uighurs, whose written monuments permit one to judge more confidently about the continuity of historiographic tradition among the nomadic dwellers of Mongolia. One is convinced of this by analyzing the Turkic and Uighur runic inscriptions of the 7th and 8th centuries. Let us take, for instance, the Turkic inscriptions on the monuments dealing with Kül-tegin, Bilge Khan and Tonyuquq (entries 65; 192; 104; 66, pp. 40-49; 293; 69; 166).

As is well-known, the small and large inscriptions on the Kül-tegin monument were written by Yolgı-tegin by order of and with the direct participation of Bilge-Khan. The inscriptions emphasize that everything written on them is the "heart-felt speech" of Bilge-khan, his genuine words, engraved at his order on "eternal stone" (entries 59, p. 33, 35; 166, p. 63).

In Klyashtornyĭ's opinion these inscriptions represent on the one hand a fairly complex literary production, and on the other, an historical chronicle with a high degree of accuracy reporting events seeming to the author to be worthy of remembrance. The text is written in a clear and precise language, the palette of artistic modes is quite diverse, although sometimes the traditional nature of the style is expressed in stereotyped formulation and archetypical expressions (entry 158, pp. 63-64).

Both inscriptions on the Kül-tegin monument present no mere historical jottings about events in the life of the Turks, but actually offer a creative composition like a historical brochure, clearly and concisely revealing the historical-political views of the aristocratic upper class of the Turkic khanate headed by the Khan.

What is the content of these inscriptions like? In the smaller inscription, which may be read as a precursor to the large one, Bilge-Khan briefly speaks about the loftiness of the Turkic khaganate during his years of rule, about the distant campaigns undertaken for "the good of the Turkic people," about the hard times when "the Turkic people . . . were completely exhausted and broken down under the rule of a khagan of the Tobgach [Chinese, i.e. an originally Mongolian speaking people whose rulers had become sinified] people"; "They [i.e., the Chinese people] give [us])

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gold, silver and silk in abundance. The words of the Chinese people have always been sweet and the materials of the Chinese people have always been soft. Deceiving by means of (their) sweet words and soft materials, the Chinese are said to cause the remote peoples to come close in this manner. After such a people have settled close to them, [the Chinese] are said to plan[t] their ill will there. [The Chinese] do not let the real wise men and real brave men make progress. [The Chinese] do not give shelter to anybody [from his immediate family] to the families of his clan and tribe. Having been taken in by their sweet words and soft materials, you Turkic people, were killed in great numbers" (entry 59, pp. 34-35; entry 294, pp. 261-2).

Still more historical data are given by the "Large Inscription" from the monument in honor of Kül-tegin, which contains a brief survey of the history of the

the Turks from ancient times to the rule of Bilge Khan, or more exactly, up to the rule of his son and successor:

When the blue sky above and the reddish-brown earth below were created, between the two human beings were created. Over the human beings my ancestors Bumín Kagan and Istāmi Kagan became rulers. After they had become rulers, they organized and ruled the state and institutions of the Turkic people.

They ruled [organizing] the Kōk [Blue] Turks between the two [boundaries]. Then the younger brothers succeeded to the throne and the sons succeeded to the throne. . . . Since the lords and peoples were not in accord, and the Chinese people were wily and deceitful, since they were tricky and created a rift between younger and elder brothers, and caused the lords and peoples to slander one another, the Turkic people caused their state which they had established to go to ruin. Their sons worthy of becoming lords became slaves, and their daughters worthy of becoming ladies became servants to the Chinese people. . . . But the Turkic god above and the Turkic holy earth and water [spirits below] acted in the following way: in order that the Turkic people would not go to ruin and in order that it would be an (independent) nation again. . . . They held my father, Iteriś Kagan and my mother, Ilbilgā Katun, at the top of heaven and raised them upwards. In severe conflicts

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Iteriś restored the Turkic *e/* [state]. After my uncle the kagan succeeded to the throne, he organized and nourished the Turkic people anew. He made the poor rich and the few numerous. Oh Turkic people, because of your unruliness, you yourselves betrayed your wise kagan who had [always] nourished you, and you yourselves betrayed your good realm which was free and independent, and you [yourselves] caused discord. In order that the name and fame of the Turkic people would not perish, Heaven . . . enthroned me. I did not become ruler over a wealthy and prosperous people at all; [on the contrary] I became ruler over a poor and miserable people who were foodless on the inside and clothless on the outside. For the sake of the Turkic people, I did not sleep by night and I did not relax by day. I, with great armies, went on campaigns twelve times. I brought the people to life who were going to perish, and nourished them. I furnished the naked people with clothes and I made the poor people rich and the few people numerous (entry 59, pp. 36-43; entry 158, pp. 60-63; entry 294, pp. 265-268).

It further speaks of battles and campaigns in which the brother and collaborator of Bilge Khan, Kül-Tegin, took part, about his deeds and affairs, and about his death and burial, among other things.

The Tonyuquq inscription is an autobiographical panegyric written within the context of a broad background of tumultuous events, in which the hero of the inscription himself was an active participant. It is noteworthy that the inscription contains not only description but an interpretation of historical events and their political evaluation. All this makes it a unique piece of historical literature of the early Turks.

The inscription, composed by order of Tonyuquq himself, informs us first and foremost that Tonyuquq received his education in China at a time when the

"Turkic people" were "in subjection to the Chinese state." Furthermore, it lays out the history of the great rebellion of the Turks against China and the creation of the Second Eastern Turkic Khaganate. Many lines are devoted to describing military campaigns of the Turks against the Kirghiz, the Tūrgeü, and the Sogdians among others. In conclusion it unreservedly praises the personal exploits of Tonyuquq, without whom "in the land of Qapγan Kagan and of the Turkic Sir people, there would have been neither tribes, nor people, nor human beings at all" (entry 59, pp. 64-70; entry 294, p. 290).

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From what has been said, it is evident that historical knowledge among the Turks was rather highly advanced. One must assume that the runic texts known at present to science are only part of the historical works created by the early Turks. It is no coincidence that new monuments of runic script are being found on the territory of Mongolia. At the present level of development of our knowledge, as we have already noted, it is hard to determine by exactly what means the historic achievements of the Turks were transmitted to the Mongols. It is scarcely likely that the Mongols had joined up with them, and then read the inscription, although the Kūl-tegin monument was well-known as early as the years in which Khubilai Khan ruled (1260-1294)(entry 141, p. 9). Far more likely, however, is it that the attainments mentioned came down to other nomadic tribes and peoples, including the Mongols, through oral transmission.

Be that as it may, it is beyond dispute that in the historiographic traditions of the early Turks and Mongols are displayed quite a few common traits, which are hard to explain solely by the ethnocultural proximity of their bearers or by the shamanist ideology common to them.

First and foremost there springs to mind the commonality in topic and theme of the traditions cited. Both the Turkic and Mongolian aristocrats were interested most of all in the history of the deeds and feats of their kagans. It may be said that their historiography arose largely from striving to magnify the kagans and to perpetuate knowledge of their actions. It is not remarkable that the common historical and political fate of Turks and Mongols gave rise to quite a few common historical themes. One of these is the problem of their relationship to China.

Above we observed how keenly the Turks took this topic up and how strongly they sound the notes of a unique anti-Chinese patriotism and independence. This topic was no less vital for the early Mongols. From the data which Rashīd al-Dīn extracted from Mongolian sources, we learn about the strained relations between Mongols and Chinese as early as the pre-Chinggis period, when the Chinese Chin emperor nailed the Mongolian Khambaqai Khan "to a wooden donkey", as he insulted and even intended to do away with the famed Qabul Khan, the third ancestor of Chinggis Khan (entry 67, vol. 1, book 1, pp. 15-16, 42-43).

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The common nature of Turkic and Mongolian historical knowledge is expressed most of all in the historical-political views of the *qayan* as the highest being on earth, the fully empowered representative of the Blue Heaven (with the

Turks: *kök tänri*; with the Mongols *köke tngri*). In our opinion, the Turkic expression *Tänri jaratmış Turk bilgä qayan* or even *Tänrida bolmış Turk bilgä qayan* (entry 59, pp. 16, 27) and the Mongolian *De'ere tenkeri-eče jaya'atu töreksen Bürte čino* (entry 57, 1, p.79) are closely linked not only by sense, but in a lexico-semantic relationship. For this reason it seems more correct to us to translate this particular Turkic expression by the words "Bilge Khan, born by fate from Heaven", the same way as we translate the Mongolian expression by the words "Börte čino, born by fate from Heaven." The translation of the Turkic expression as "heaven-born" ("in Heaven" or "arisen from Heaven" (entry 59, p. 33), or "established by Heaven," "favored by Heaven") is inaccurate (entry 59, p. 20). If we translate either of the two Turkic expressions given above into Mongolian, then they become *Tenkeri-eče jaya'atu töreksen Bilge qayan*.

It is hard to say among which of the two Central Asian peoples, the Turks or the Mongols, that the title *qayan* first appeared. Some researchers consider that long before the Turks the Hsien-pi, one of the proto-Mongolian tribes, used this title (entries 281, pp.1-39; 282; 219, pp.171-2; 291, p. 429), and after the Turks, so did the Khitans, another Mongolian related people.

It is evident, from the inscriptions reviewed above, that the cult of the kagan was widely spread among the Turks, and to no less degree was it also developed among the Mongols under Chinggis-Khan. The Turkic kagan's cult was inseparably linked with respect for the Blue Heaven. Heaven, among the Turks as indeed among the Mongols, is the creator of all beings, the ruler of all destinies on Earth. They are linked with Blue Heaven likewise through their ethnonyms: the Turks have *kök Türk* Blue Turks, and the Mongols have *köke mongγol* Blue Mongols. Subject solely to the one Heaven is the kagan among both Turks and Mongols; Heaven bestows the state on the kagans (entry 59, p.39) and seats them on the throne. The good and bad deeds of the kagan are accomplished by the will and grace of Heaven. Attempts to explain this or that historical

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event as due to the intervention of Heaven may often be found, as we shall see below, even in the first historiographic monument of the Mongols, the *Secret History*.

The runic inscriptions bear witness to the fact that the Turks used the twelve-year animal cycle of chronology¹. They use two systems of chronology, one by years of the subject-hero's life, and one by years of this the animal cycle. At the end of the large inscription on the Kül-tegin monument, it says, "Kül-tegin flew away [i.e., died] in the Year of the Sheep, on the seventeenth day . . . [the epitaph structure], the carved [figures?] and the stone with the inscription [in his honor] we dedicated in the Year of the Ape, in the seventh month, on the twenty-seventh

¹ The question of the time and means of transmission of the animal-cycle chronology to the Turks is still not explained. It may be that they borrowed it from the Sogdians, inasmuch in old Uighur texts this system bears a Sogdian name, *anxrwzn* (entry 249, p. 19). About chronology in old Turkic monuments, see entry 227, pp. 191-203.

day. Kül-tegin died at the age of forty-seven" (entry 59, p. 43). But alongside this the basic events in the Turkic inscriptions are dated according to the years of the subject-hero's life. This is best illustrated by the monument to Mogilian Khan (*ibid.*, pp. 20-24).

As is well-known, the Uighurs, who were in their time one of the mostly highly cultured nations of Central Asia, exercised considerable influence on the Mongols, conveying to them their script, being their first teachers, giving them, along with the Khitans, cadres of state officials, etc. It is known that Chinggis Khan entrusted instruction of his children and those of the aristocracy to Uighur teachers. The Mongols became acquainted with Buddhism through the Uighurs. This is demonstrated by the fact that the numerous Buddhist terms among the Mongols are of Uighur origin. Uighur Buddhist monasteries were functioning at Qaraqorum under the first Mongolian khans.

It is difficult to say that such comprehensive cultural influence by the Uighurs did not affect Mongolian historiography. The sources reveal that Uighur historical knowledge was rather highly developed. Being one of the Turkic nationalities, they could readily inherit the Turkic historiographic tradition as well. The Uighurs, after the example of their predecessors, pursued the practice of fixing historical events in stone, even using, especially in the first cases, that self-same Turkic runic script. Thus for instance the monument to the Uighur kagan Moyun-chur, who defeated the last Turkic kagan, Özmish-tegin, in 745, was written in runic, not Uighur script (entry 59). This monument affords great interest

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for studying the Uighur traditions of historical writing. On first comparison of it with the Turkic monuments reviewed above one can discover that the Uighurs in their turn were under strong influence from the Turkic historiographic tradition, despite the hostile relations of the Uighurs to the Turkic kagans.

In neither content nor form does the Uighur monument differ greatly from its Turkic prototypes. The basic historical-political ideology of the monument is the very same ideology of the manly kagan "born with a destiny from Heaven." In it, as in the Turkic monuments, the chief attention is fixed on a description of the military campaigns of the Uighur kagan, whom almighty Blue Heaven always protected.

But the Uighur monument has some features which distinguish it from the Turkic ones. First of all it strikes one that it does not bear so focused a political-pamphlet style as do some of the Turkic models. The Moyun-chur monument is a detailed, sometimes minute, record of the Uighur kagan's campaigns. Here the author rarely allows himself any poetical or other digressions; he informs one, but does not sing; he establishes facts, but does not embellish them.

One of the particular oddities of this inscription is the elaborate nature of its chronology. The basic events, as distinguished from the Turkic inscriptions, are enumerated not according to the years of the hero's life, but by years of the twelve-year animal cycle, indicating months, days and even whether it is daytime or night-time. The Uighurs, as we can see, along with the Turks, played an im-

portant role in creating an historical chronology on the basis of the twelve-year cycle, an old system of annal-keeping of Central Asian nomadic peoples². We have every reason to suppose that it was from the Uighurs that this system went to the Mongols as early as the 13th century as a basis for chronological dating. When comparing the Turkic system of the twelve-year cycle with the one adopted in Mongolian historiography, it is obvious that they have much in common. It is clear from the Turkic and Mongolian monuments that in those times the Turks, Uighurs and Mongols did not differentiate years in this cycle by the signs and elements which became known to the Mongols later. It is noteworthy [33]

that the names of six of the twelve animals in the cycle have the same sounds among both the Turkic nationalities and the Mongols, namely,

Turkic	Mongolian
bars jil	bars jil
tabisyan jil	taulai jil
lū jil	luu jil
qon/qoyin jil	qonin jil
bič'in jil	bič'in jil
taqiyu jil	takiy-a jil

One should, however, note that the twelve-year system of chronology among the Mongols underwent two stages of development. In the first the Mongols used it exactly as did the Turks, but in the second, beginning in the 17th century, Mongolian historiography began to employ the Tibetan, and sometimes the Chinese, versions of the animal-cycle chronology.

The sources show that the Uighur runic inscriptions already discovered are not the only historiographic Uighur monuments on the territory of Mongolia. The Persian historian Juvayni, for instance, informs us that during a visit to Qaraqorum during the reign of Möngke Khan he saw amidst the ruins of the old Uighur capital, Qara-Balghasun, stones with inscriptions incised on them. Möngke Khan ordered one of these inscriptions to be read, but no one could decipher it. Then people from China were invited, who determined that the inscription was in Chinese characters, and they read it (entry 89, pp. 54-55). Juvayni cites in his book the content of this inscription, the stone original of which apparently has not come down to our times. There is some reason to assume that it was one of those Uighur inscriptions which were carved on stone in Chinese, Turkic and Sogdian scripts, similar to what had been done on the then sole monument preserved, discovered at the end of the 19th century (for translations of the Chinese text of this inscription, see entries 103, pp. 286-291; 114).

² A considerable literature is devoted to the twelve-year animal cycle; we may mention particularly entries 223; 206; 151; and 260.

But the inscription which Juvayni mentions cannot be identified with the just-mentioned trilingual inscription. The one he saw, to judge from Juvayni's exposition, contained a legend widespread in his time about the origin of the Uighur kagan's clan of Buqu kagan; and the second, according to the Chinese text, which has been translated into German, contains information about the conversion of the Uighurs to Manicheism (see entry 67, vol. 1, book 1, p. 139; see likewise entry 267, p. 73; entry 222, p. 247). On the whole this inscription is sharply different in content

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from the Turkic and Uighur monuments known to us. It is possible that it was one of the first efforts of the Uighurs to record their oral historical traditions in writing.

The inscription says that Buqu tegin and his brothers were born from a great mound heated by the light which descended on it from the sky, and the mound was located between two trees which stood between two rivers, the Tughla (Tula) and the Selenga, which flowed together in a place called Qamlanchu. After these children grew up, they went to these trees as if to their parents and began to show respect to them. Then the trees, having received the gift of speech, predicted a great future for the children. Having learned of these marvels, the Uighur people decided to elect Buqu as their first kagan. It further relates that Buqu kagan brought under his power many nations of East and West (entry 89, pp. 55-59).

Juvayni emphasizes that the legend he cites is a "falsehood," one of hundreds of oral tales similar to it, displaying the ignorance of the compilers and disseminators (entry 89, p. 60), and the fact that he mentions that among the Uighur princes was a "family [genealogical] tree, affixed to the wall of their houses" (entry 89, p. 61), bears witness to the existence of genealogical records among the Uighurs. However they have not come down to us.

It goes without saying that the meager materials at our disposal do not allow one to fully reveal the state of historical writing among the Turkic and Uighur peoples. But even the small amount known gives some basis to confirm that these peoples in the period of their flourishing had at their disposal their own original historiography written on stone, and representing a significant stage in the development of historical knowledge among the nomads, so that in early Mongolia there did exist a unique nomadic historiography, to the creation of which all tribes and nations who had settled the Mongolian soil at different times, made their contribution. But there can be no doubt that this question requires additional investigation.

The historiographic traditions of the predecessors that the Mongols inherited were raised by them to a new, higher level. They likewise knew

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practical ways to set down historic events on stones. But only a single monument of such type has come down to us. This is the so-called Stone of Chinggis erected in 1225 in honor of Yisüngke, the nephew of Chinggis Khan. A number of scholars worked on the decipherment and translation of this monument, including I. J.

Schmidt, Dorji Banzarov, I. Klyukin and Kh. Perlee, but it would be more accurate to say that only the latter two scholars deciphered it more or less correctly (cf. entries 157 and 124).

The inscription, the oldest specimen of Mongolian script known, states that Chinggis Khan, having returned from a campaign against the Sartaguls, set up a meeting of the princes, during which Yisüngke shot from his bow a distance of 335 *alda* (or fathoms, the distance between outstretched arms). That is all. Naturally this single monument is insufficient to judge the degree to which the practical technique of recording events on stone was disseminated among the Mongols. It is only apparent that such a technique was not alien to them.

Historical-Cultural Prerequisites for Mongolian Written Historiography

The crucial moment in the development of Mongolian historical knowledge occurred in the process of forming a single Mongolian state that accomplished the unification of the separate tribes on the vast territory of Mongolia. This state was founded in 1206 by Chinggis Khan. It is commonly recognized that the creation of this state was a progressive event of enormous significance in the history of the Mongolian people. Within the confines of a single state there was executed the process of consolidating the Mongolian nationality, which tripped off significant upheavals in the development of the intellectual culture of the Mongols.

The greatest event of Mongol cultural history was the introduction at the beginning of the 13th century of the common-Mongolian script, based on Uighur writing. The young state needed literate and educated persons, who could bring into being a system to teach writing to the Mongols. People appeared who were able not only to serve in the state chancelleries but who could also produce literary work. The Mongolian court now held *bitegčis*, i.e., clerks or secretaries, who compiled state

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papers. This work was performed by Uighurs, Naimans, Chinese and emigrants from Central Asia working side by side with Mongols. Their chief duty was to produce decrees and other documents of the Mongolian khans in their respective languages, which in its turn enabled the spread of culture.

Considerable literary activity was created and developed on the basis of the new script. At the beginning of the 13th century there was carried out the first codification of Mongolian law, intended to serve the purpose of strengthening the Mongolian state. This first compilation of Mongolian law in writing was titled the *Yeke jasa* i.e. in Turkic, the Great Yasagh (see entry 67, vol. 1, book 2, pp. 135, 197, 234, 259, 263, 278; entries 68 and 185).

It may be assumed that in working out the *Great Jasaγ*, the first supreme judge of the Mongolian state, Shigi-qutuqu (approx. 1180-1262) played an active role. The *Secret History* writes: "And then Chinggis Khan [ordered], 'Writing in a blue[-script] register all decisions about the distribution and about the judicial matters of the entire population, make it into a book (i.e., permanent re-

cord). Until the offspring of my offspring, let no one change any of the blue writing that Shigi-qutuqu, after deciding in accordance with me, shall make into a book with white paper. Anyone who changes it shall be guilty” (entry 293, PFEH 21, p. 27). Juvayni also gives an interesting report about the original establishment of the Great Jasay (entry 89, p. 25).

Consequently, in the 13th century there came together the fortunate circumstance of the appearance of Mongolian written history, on the basis of a long tradition of development of historical knowledge among the nomadic peoples in Mongolia, and of the oral historical creativity of those same Mongols.

II. THE *SECRET HISTORY*

The First Great Monument of Mongolian Historiography

The Question of Dating and Authorship of the Monument

As we have stated, the rise of Mongolian historiography was a significant phenomenon in the cultural history of the Mongolian state. The greatest and [37]

sole preserved monument of the 13th century is the *Secret History* (the *Niyūča tobčiyān*).³

The significance of this work as a monument of Mongolian historiography, and as a source for the history of the Mongols is extraordinarily great. An enormous literature in many languages has been devoted to its investigation, and the monument itself has been translated and published in Chinese, Japanese, Russian, German, French, English, Turkic, Bulgarian and Hungarian.

Despite the fact that leading Mongolists of the world have studied the *Secret History* for over a hundred years, this monument, as a historical phenomenon, is far from fully studied. Scholars have concerned themselves and continue to concern themselves with philological and textual analyses, which is merely the first, though an extremely necessary step towards its comprehensive unveiling. But in this field much still remains incomplete, and a host of old studies are in need of re-working. The basic difficulty in analyzing the *Secret History* lies in the fact that scholars do not have the original, but are using a text transcribed in Mongolian by means of Chinese characters. This transfer of the Mongolian text into a Chinese transcription was done many years after this monument was written

³ This name for the monument was generally accepted until not long ago. However in recent years some researchers began to express doubts about the document having been originally called the *Mongγol-un niyūča tobčiyān*. Thus, Father A. Mostaert expressed the supposition that originally its name was the *Cinggis qayan-u huja'ur*. Father Mostaert translated this title into French as *Origine de Cinggis-qayan* (entry 258, pp. ix-xiv).

down, i.e., as some researchers assume, between 1368 and 1418.⁴

To reconstitute the Mongolian original, scholars have made various Latin-script transcriptions of the monument on the basis of the Chinese transcription, taking into account peculiarities of the spoken and written Mongolian language of the 13th and 14th centuries. It is well-known that the principles and system of transcribing the Mongolian text, as well as decoding archaic expressions and words are far from identical in the works of the different authors.

For this reason, when using the monument along with the Chinese transcription, it is necessary to utilize all works existing at present in which the Mongolian text is restored in modern scientific transcription⁵.

When quoting the *Secret History*, the author has mainly employed the Russian translation of Kozin (entry 57), although other translations and comments by Pelliot, Mostaert, Haenisch and F. W. Cleaves were taken into account. For the use of Russian-based readers, we retain the Kozin citations, but now use the English translation from de Rachewiltz (entry 293), as later improved and modified by Dr. de Rachewiltz himself.

It is well-known that many researchers (as Palladius, Pelliot, Haenisch, Vladimirtsov and Damdinsuren) think that the Mouse Year, indicated in the colophon, is the year it was written (1240), inasmuch as exactly that year of the twelve-year cycle falls in that period

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of Ögedei Khan's reign. The monument says nothing about the death of Ögedei in 1241, nor about other later events. One must moreover hold in mind that the Mouse Year is the final one in the sequence of events which the document conveys, and that this year is mentioned immediately after relating the chief events

⁴ Prof. Bayar of Inner Mongolia adheres to another opinion. He supposes that the Chinese transcription could have been made earlier by Čayan, the famous translator and scholar of the Yüan period, whose biography is found in the *Yüan-shih*. See entry 303, p. 62.

⁵ Since the first edition of our book, there have been printed several important books containing reconstruction of the old Mongolian original and its rendering into modern Mongolian, as well as new translations into Japanese, English, French, German and other languages. In addition to the work of de Rachewiltz (entry 270), one must also mention the following works:

1. Bayar (entry 303).
2. Igor de Rachewiltz (entry 293).
3. Francis W. Cleaves, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1982. (entry 315).

4. Eldengtei and Ardajab, *Mongγol-un niyuca tobčiya: seyiregülel, tayilburi*. (Kökeqota: Öbör Mongγol-un Suryan Kümüjil-ün Qoriy-a, 1986).

5. *The History and Life of Chinggis Khan (The Secret History of the Mongols)*, translated and annotated by Urgunge Onon (Leiden: Brill, 1990) (entry 308).

6. Ozawa Shigeo (entry 304).

of the last decade of Ögedei Khan, i.e., the 1230's, and prior to the Mouse Year only a single other date is cited, the Hare Year (1231). Of course the fact that the compilers of the *Secret History*, who indicated the Mouse Year as the date the monument was written, noted neither the sign of this year by the Chinese calendrical system nor by the Tibeto-Mongolian system, does create definite difficulties in establishing the precise date.

Likewise, the Yeke Quriltai (The Grand Assembly), which took place, according to the words of the author of the colophon, in the same year in which they concluded their work, is not mentioned in any source known to science. Taking all this into account, some scholars express doubt that the *Secret History* was actually written in 1240, and advance their own hypotheses on its dating.

In this respect one should say that the Mouse Year which interests us is not made more specific in the monument by indicating its cyclic sign or element, but then neither do any of the other dates cited by the compilers have these specifics. In any case, those events of which the dates are well-known, can be more or less confidently related to this or that year of the animal cycle mentioned in the monument, and the corresponding year of the modern chronology. Hence, we know that the first Fowl Year, mentioned in §141 of the *Secret History*, corresponds to 1201, and the Mouse Year mentioned in §269, refers to 1228 and 1240. Guided by this principle one can with no particular difficulty determine the Mouse Year mentioned in the colophon as the year the copy was made, inasmuch as this year belongs to the same sixty-year cycle relating to all other dates mentioned in the *Secret History*. As most scholars suppose, the book might have been composed between 1228 and 1240. In any case, as Cleaves pointed out, "the suggested dates of its composition now range from the years 1228 to 1264, and the grounds for later dating have become increasingly hypothetical."⁶

It is true that the sources do not mention a quriltai of 1240, a Mouse Year. But we cannot refute the possibility that Ögedei Khan called such a quriltai, as he did rather frequently during the years of his reign. Thus for instance, in the Horse Year (1234) and in

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the Sheep Year (1235) the Khan convoked two quriltais in succession; the latter one was specially devoted to the fact that all the sons, relatives and emirs were again to listen to the Jasay and the Decrees (entry 67, vol. 2, p. 35).

This does not exclude the possibility that a similar quriltai might have been convoked by Ögedei Khan in a Mouse Year, 1228 or 1240. The Khan might well have wanted all his relatives to listen to the history of "The Golden Clan," after which it would have been committed to writing so as to preserve this history in the minds of successive generations. It is important to notice in this connection that according to the colophon, this quriltai took place in the locality of Kōdege-aral on the Kerülen River, i.e., right there where the famous quriltai which se-

⁶ Francis W. Cleaves, Introduction, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. lxxv.

lected Ögedei for the Khan's throne was held.

In our view, the data of the colophon directly indicate that the Yeke quriltai had a close connection to recording the monument. It is fully possible that this quriltai, as a plenary session of the highest representatives of the "Golden Clan," gave sanction to the first recording of a history of the Chinggisid House.

It seems to me that the European languages have an inexact interpretation of the colophon and the translations of it into European languages are not quite correct (entries 82, p. 148; 57, p. 199; 258, p. 392). The translations in question, differ among themselves, but commit a common error. If one believes them, it seems that the recording of the monument was produced either in the Mouse Year or during the Great Quriltai (Haenisch, Kozin), or during the time the Khan's court was at Dolo'an boldag (Mostaert, de Rachewiltz), and the Great Quriltai is mentioned in the colophon solely as an event enabling one to fix the time the chronicle was compiled, but is not linked to its appearance. Moreover, Mostaert and de Rachewiltz connect the Mouse Year not directly to the time when the monument was set down in writing, but to the time when the Khan's court was staying at Dolo'an-boldag (a locality of Küdege-aral). Hence according to the translations of the scholars cited, the Yeke Quriltai and the Mouse Year have no direct relation to the record of the chronicle itself. Father Mostaert in particular observes that the Mongolian *büküi-tür* relates grammatically not only to *bawuju*, but also to *quriju* (entry 258, p. 39); in other words, *yeke qurilta quriju* goes with the second sentence: *Kerülen-ü köde'e aral-un Dolo'an boldaq-a, Silginček qoyar ja'ura*

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ordos bawuju büküi-tür, and not to the last compound predicate of the whole sentence (*bičijü dawusba*).

A syntactic analysis of the *Secret History* colophon enables one to conclude that the whole of it is a typical Mongolian compound sentence, consisting of three parts:

1. *Yeke qurilta quriju*;
2. *Kerülen-ü köde'e aral-un Dolo'an boldaq-a silginček qoyar ja'ura ordos bawuju büküi-tür*;
3. *bičijü dawusba* (entry 57, §282, p. 199).

The first part can only refer to the final compound predicate, which is the predicate of the main clause. It is expressed by the subordinate gerund in *-jü* (modern Mongolian *-z*), which indicates the causal relationship with the action of the main clause (*bičijü dawusba*). As for the second part, it clarifies the place of action of the main clause. The phrase *quluγana jil quran sara-da*, although it stands immediately before the second part, does not relate to it in sense, but is an adverb of time of the main clause (*bičijü dawusba*).

Hence the colophon speaks of how, when and where the work of recording was performed: How? *yeke qurilta quriju* (lit. 'the Grand Assembly having gathered'). When? *quluγana jil quran sara-da* (in the Doe Month of the Mouse Year.)

Where? *Kerülen-ü köde'e aral-un Dolo'an boldaq-a šilginček . . . qoyar ja'ura ordos bawuju бүкүй-түр* (in Dolo'an-Boldaq at Ködege Island in the Kerülen River, (namely) between (the place named) and Šilginček, (where the court stayed), or literally, upon location of the court at Dolo'an-Boldaq).

If we think that the first clause relates to the main clause (*yeke qurilta quriju . . . bičijü dawusba*), then it becomes clear that we are dealing with an active subject (*yeke qurilta*) of the main clause. In other words, the Grand Assembly is the subject in relation to the predicate *bičijü dawusba*. The sentence *yeke qurilta quriju . . . bičijü dawusba* belongs with sentences in modern Mongolian of the type: *ix xural xuraldaj, ündsen xuul' batlav* (The Great Hural having met, it approved the Constitution).

In short, we consider a correct translation of the colophon to be: "Having finished the record as a result of (by reason of) the convocation of the Grand Assembly, in the month of the Doe [the seventh month]

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of the Mouse Year, upon location of the court at Dolo'an-Boldaq at Ködege Island in the Kerülen River, namely between (there) and Šilginček."

The accuracy of this translation of our colophon is in principle most important for clarifying the question of authorship of the work. If I make no error in understanding the text of the colophon, the indication is that the recording of the monument was finished not at that time, but as a result of convoking the Grand Assembly (or indeed at the Grand Assembly) and this gives us a basis to conclude that the Mongolian Grand Assembly played a role in the appearance of the *Secret History*. Above I remarked that as it is logically the subject of the main clause, this in my view points right to the Grand Assembly's direct involvement in the appearance of the monument.

It is quite possible that the history of the "Golden Clan" of the Chinggisids had long been transmitted from mouth to mouth, and finally was fixed in writing and approved by actual representatives of this very clan at their Grand Assembly. It might be that during these extended sessions some preservers of the past, relatives and close companions of Chinggis Khan, some from memory, some helped by court records, laid forth the most important events in the history of the Chinggis clan, which were written down right there by the *bitegčis*, the scribes.⁷ Assist-

⁷ Prof. Bayar, in the interesting introduction to his three-volume book on the *Secret History* (entry 303), has given considerable data from Chinese sources on the learned *bitegčis* (scribe-secretaries) who served at the court of Chinggis Khan and Ögedei Khan. He is of the opinion that the *Secret History* must have been written by the most learned *bitegčis*, namely, Jingyai (Cingyai -Sh. B.) Čingsang from Kereyid aimak, Gereyidke, the head of the *bitegčis* and Sečekür from Qorlos aimak who served Chinggis Khan as a chief of one thousand (chiliarch) and a *bitegči* (entry 303, pp. 30-35, 50-51). Chingyai is written in several different ways, as Čingqai or as Čingqai, in Chinese as *Chen-hai* or *Ch'eng-hai*. He was born about 1169 and died about 1252. As Paul D. Buell writes, he was "a trusted associate and principal advisor of Chinggis and then chief minister to that qan and his successors Ögödei and Güyük, his service to the Mongols spanning nearly

ing them were popular tale-tellers, the bearers of early Mongolian oral poetry, and active participants in every ceremonial occasion of that time, including the Grand Assemblies. That is why, as it seems to us, the colophon gives in first place its mention of the Assembly, as it were emphasizing its involvement in the appearance of the monument to all who were in attendance at it. The possibility must also be noted that the entire copy went through a detailed literary editing by a person able to employ the pen. Bearing witness to this is the elaboration in theme and composition, polishing the language and style, the logical sequence of narration and the ideological orientation.

The efforts of some researchers (Haenisch, Poucha and others) to establish the individual authorship of the monument can scarcely ever expect to be crowned with success. The *Secret History* above all else is a creative product of an entire collective of court aristocrats of antiquity and of tale-tellers.

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It was first reduced to writing with the active participation of actual representatives of the "Golden Clan" headed by the Khan.⁸ At the Grand Assembly they talked it over, and then approved this written variant of the history of the founders of the Mongolian state.

At the dawn of Mongolian historiography, under conditions of that time, such a composition could not have arisen merely at the creative initiative of some chronicler. The appearance of such a work was in the first place conditioned by the practical interests of Golden Clan representatives after the death of Chinggis Khan. If the Great Jasar was the maker of the highest law, guaranteeing the reliability of the political bases of Chinggis Khan's empire, then the *Secret History*, in the ideas of its creators, ought to have served as a history of the life and deeds of founders of the Empire, intended to instruct their successors. And the need to create such a history, one must imagine, was particularly great during the years of Ögedei's rule as Khan. As everyone knows he strove to be faithful to the tenets of his father.

five decades. . . ." For other details about him, see Paul D. Buell, "Čingqai - in the service of the Khan," in *Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol Yüan Period* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993), pp. 95-111 (entry 311).

Insofar as Prof. Bayar's opinion is concerned, I have to say that although it is difficult to categorically ascribe the authorship of the *Secret History* to any particular person or persons, it is possible that the first written history of the Mongols was the final result of creative efforts by the learned *bitegčis* who, *inter alia*, practiced recording the deeds of their Khans at their courts.

A new, very original hypothesis concerning the date and authorship of the *Secret History* was recently proposed by Prof. Shigeo Ozawa whose life-long study of the monument has been crowned with excellent results for the last several decades. See entry 332. While completing the preparation of this book for publication I had the chance to read the latest book of Sh. Ozawa in its Mongolian translation.

⁸ I am pleased that our supposition in this respect put forward in early 1970s is being supported by the latest investigation of Prof. Sh. Ozawa (entry 332, p. 122).

Speaking about the date the *Secret History* was written, it is impossible not to touch on the opinions of some researchers who dispute the traditional dating and advance other hypotheses. René Grousset, the first to express doubts about the accuracy of the traditional dating, connected the Mouse Year with 1252 and did this by the following steps. First, one of the speeches of Chinggis Khan (entry 57, §255, pp. 185-6) sounds as if he foresaw the transfer of the throne from the line of Ögedei to the line of Tolui and then into the line of Möngke, who became Khan in 1251; second, the final paragraph of the work (entry 57, §282, pp. 198-199) is rather reminiscent of a posthumous evaluation of Ögedei's attainments, although the words quoted are ascribed to the Khan himself (entry 229, pp. 230, 303; entry 228, p. 27; entry 230, pp. 1-2).

It may be stated that Pelliot and de Rachewiltz have proven the groundlessness of Grousset's opinion (entry 261; 269, pp. 187-8, 196-7). Pelliot in particular noted that the claim of Tolui's line to the throne must have been known even before the death of Ögedei, and in that portion of the *Yuan-shih* where it speaks of the most important events occurring after 1251 there is not a word about the Grand Assembly of 1252, and finally, that the absence of any mention in the *Yüan-shih* of the Grand Assembly of 1240 must be

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a consequence of the generally fragmentary nature of the chapter devoted to Ögedei Khan. At the present time Pelliot's opinion has essentially been confirmed by de Rachewiltz who, guided by the Persian and Chinese sources, considers it established that Tolui's claim to the Khan's throne made its appearance as early as the Great Assembly of 1227-1229 (entry 269, pp. 196-7).

In the light of these data it becomes evident that §255 of the *Secret History* cannot serve as proof of Grousset's hypothesis.

One may add to what has been said that we do not quite understand the ideas of investigators concerning the pro-Tolui orientation (§254, 255 etc.). L. Ligeti, for instance, maintains that these and other paragraphs where it speaks of succession to the throne were added later to justify the rise of the Tolui clan. Ligeti's deductions are these: this part of the monument stands outside the general context, it is impossible to find this in the corresponding parts of Rashīd al-Dīn's work, and it is absent from Lubsangdanjin's *Altan Tobči*. De Rachewiltz likewise adheres to Ligeti's view (entry 269, p. 197, note 48).

It is hard to conclude from §§254-255 that they reflect any pro-Tolui orientation. On the contrary, the basic thrust of this text leads toward justifying Chinggis Khan's designation of Ögedei as successor to the throne. They clearly state that Tolui, as well as the other sons of Chinggis, were in agreement with their father's selection, and expressed a readiness to serve Ögedei. If there is talk of events inserted later in these paragraphs, they clearly relate to the post-Chinggis period, and not to the post-Ögedei one. It is quite possible that these texts "through the words" of Chinggis Khan and his sons advocate the position of Ögedei's adherents, and not that of the representatives of Tolui's clan.

William Hung, Gary Ledyard and Igor de Rachewiltz have dwelt in greater

detail on the question of dating the monument. In the opinion of the first two authors, the Mouse Year indicated in the colophon corresponds to 1264 or even later (to 1276 or 1288). Their basic arguments center on the fact that in the Mongolian text as transcribed into Chinese characters, there is a geographical name (Chin. *Hsüan-te-fu*, Mong. *Söndiiwu*, cf. §247) which did not exist prior to 1250, but turned up

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only after 1263, and that in another paragraph there is a report about events having taken place in the 1250's (entry 241, pp. 487-492, entry 250, pp. 1-10). These views encountered sharp rejection on the part of Father Mostaert and Igor de Rachewiltz, and some other researchers.

Father Mostaert, when he expressed his doubts about the question of dating proposed by William Hung, wrote that readers would like to know Hung's opinion on the reasons why the author of the monument maintains complete silence about such important events as the death of Ögedei, the rule of following Khans, completing the conquest of Persia, renewing the war with the Sung dynasty, the ascension of Khubilai to the throne, and so on, which took place during the 24 years from the death of Ögedei until 1264 (entries 258 and 269, note 254).

The factual data cited by de Rachewiltz place in doubt Hung's main proof, which is based on the presence of the place-name *Hsüan-te-fu* in §247. De Rachewiltz maintains that this term existed as early as the beginning of the 1230's, although it was not given official status until later. This name is found in reports by P'eng Ta-ya in his book *Hei-t'a shih-lüeh*. De Rachewiltz considers it possible that this place-name existed even in 1228 (entry 269, p. 196).

Hung's attempt to link the date of writing he proposes (1264) with the date of the colophon likewise cannot be considered convincing. The indication in the colophon that the Grand Assembly was called in a place named *Dolo'an-boldag* on the *Kerülen* River puts Hung in a difficult position. If the monument was compiled during the *Yüan* dynasty, when the capital was located in *Dai-du*, when Khubilai broke the ties to his ancestral lands of yore, convoking a *quriltai* solely in China, then why does the monument talk about a *quriltai* taking place whilst the Khan's court was staying on the *Kerülen* River? But if we admit that the *quriltai* took place in 1264 in Mongolia, then how can one explain this event so unusual for the time of Khubilai?

So as to get out of this difficult spot, Hung expresses a supposition that a Grand Assembly, taking place in the seventh month (25 July to 22 August) of 1264 was not set down in the *Yüan-shih*. However, this does not exclude the possibility that such a meeting of princes of the blood could have occurred. Between March 27 and September 22, Khubilai

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was presumably in *Shang-du*. But this does not mean that he could not have gone on a hunt, or have presided over an unrecorded meeting. It is possible there was another assembly in which *Arig-Buqu* and his adherents took part. And at this meeting, which took place at *Köde'e aral* on the *Kerülen* River, it may be that

they decided Arig-Buqu ought to acknowledge his defeat before Khubilai. If there was in reality such a Grand Assembly under the chairmanship of Arig Buqu, Hung concludes, then we can scarcely expect that it was recorded in the *Yüan-shih*, as Khubilai would have wished to consign to oblivion everything connected with discord in his clan.

Now Hung asks his readers to imagine, during this hypothetical meeting in the cool August evenings on the banks of the Kerülen River, that some sort of aged teller of tales is recounting his stories to the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Chinggis Khan. That, in Hung's opinion, is how the famed *Secret History* arose (entry 241, pp. 491-492).

It is hard to agree with Hung's deductions. It is impossible to presuppose that Arig-Buqu would have convoked a Grand Assembly on the Kerülen in order to decide the issue of his capitulation before Khubilai, and that it was precisely during this time that the *Secret History* was compiled. There is no information about this convocation either in the Chinese sources or in Rashīd al-Dīn's book, where the struggle between Arig-Buqu and Khubilai for the Khan's throne is described quite in detail (entry 67, vol. 2, pp. 156-168).

Rashīd al-Dīn gives information about two quriltais held in 1260. One was called by Arig-Buqu in the locality of Yailag-Altai, and the other by Khubilai in the Chinese city of K'ai-p'ing-fu (K'ai-feng), and at both quriltais the two brothers proclaimed themselves Khan at the same time. Thus did the struggle for the throne begin between them. Rashīd al-Dīn cites interesting details about a hearing organized by Khubilai concerning the defeated Arig-Buqu and his partisans (entry 67, pp. 165-168). But he says not a word about the quriltai which Hung has in mind. It is hard to verify that any eighty-eight year-old story-teller, who was, according to data in the *Yüan-shih*, one of those who supplied materials to the Chinese court historian Wang-O, would have been able to create such a marvelous

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historical-literary monument imbued with "the aroma of the steppe," depicting accurately and in detail the life and customs of the early Mongols.

The arguments of Gary Ledyard in favor of the new views of dating the *Secret History* likewise cannot be considered convincing. In his opinion, the report in §274 about the campaign of Yisüder-qorci into Korea following Jalairtai-qorči refers to those events, which according to the *Koryŏ-sa* [The History of Korea], took place in 1254-1258. Accordingly, the first Mouse Year after 1258 can only be 1264, which Ledyard therefore considers to be the earliest possible date for composition of the *Secret History* (entry 250, pp.9-10).

Connecting the campaigns mentioned in the Mongolian source with the events which took place under Ögedei (1229-1241), Ledyard regards as anachronistic. There is no doubt that the *Koryŏ-sa*, an accurate court chronicle of the Korean princes, is a most authoritative source on the history of Korea in the period of the Mongol conquests. But the question arises, would it not be possible that a still earlier activity of the two Mongolian military leaders who interest us might be

attested solely in the *Secret History*, and have escaped the attention of those who executed the court records of the Korean prince?

From data in the *Yuan-shih* we know that Jalairtai served all the Mongolian khans from Chinggis to Möngke. It would be hard to establish that all the historical events spoken of in §274 of the *Secret History* actually took place in the years of Ögedei's reign and that only the information about campaigns to Korea refers to a much later period, to the period of Möngke Khan's reign, but is incorporated into this paragraph as a supplement, so to speak, like a back number of a periodical.

If it is correct that information about the campaigns to Korea was incorporated into the *Secret History* as a kind of supplement, then why do other greater events of Mongolian history from the reigns of Güyük and Möngke find no echo in it? In reply to this question, Ledyard expresses a view which essentially leads to the idea that in illuminating the history of Mongolian-Korean relations there are similar anachronisms, not only in the *Secret History* but also in the *Yüan-shih* and Rashīd al-Dīn's *Complete Collection of Histories*. This affirmation, however, no one

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can verify. If the campaigns of Jalairtai to Korea in the *Secret History*, which supposedly took place in 1258, were in point of fact erroneously connected with 1234, then the authors of the *Yüan-shih* and the *Complete Collection of Histories* behaved differently: they connected the arrival of the Korean hostage Wang Chun in Mongolia to 1258, when in reality this event refers to 1241. To explain errors in dating events in Mongolian-Korean relations in three completely different sources, Ledyard supposes that a source common to all lies at the basis of this text, a chronicle unknown to us, compiled about 1258 and recounting events using the twelve-year cyclical chronology. This chronicle might specifically speak of the deeds of Yisüder under the Horse Year (1258) and about the arrival of Wang Chun from Korea to Mongolia, also in that year. And then, apparently after 1258, the events mentioned might have been moved back for two twelve-year cycles, to the years of Ögedei's reign.

Such an error might occur, in Ledyard's opinion, as a result of someone confusing pages of the chronicle or, having discovered an evident error in dating the arrival of Wang Chun in Mongolia, and deciding to correct it, redated this event to another Horse Year, to 1234. Such an operation might also have been carried out on the date of dispatching Yisüder to Korea. The compilers of the *Secret History*, not having grasped the essence of the matter, uncritically transferred this date, 1234, into their chronicle, as a result of which the events connected with Yisüder and Jalairtai were presented to the readers as allegedly having taken place in 1234, during the reign of Ögedei Khan, and not 24 years later, as they had in reality (entry 250, pp. 10-16).

What can one say about these ideas of Ledyard?

First of all, it is hard to prove that a person who knew and remembered the date of Wang Chun's arrival in Mongolia could have confused it with the date of

Yisüder and Jalairtai's campaign to Korea, although such a person, in the opinion of Ledyard himself, was an eyewitness to the campaign indicated. Under such conditions the "accidental" transfer of events from the Möngke Khan era to the reign of Ögedei seems quite doubtful. Secondly, it remains unexplained

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what hindered the compilers of the *Secret History* from including in their chronicle a host of other events from the 1240's and 1250's which were far more important in their significance and consequences. It must likewise be stated that it is scarcely possible to establish a date for the monument on the basis of a single fact of some sort, even if this fact is in itself related to the period which Ledyard has in mind.

Ledyard, one-sidedly accepting as true the data of the *Koryo-sa*, and on this basis advancing a new date of birth for the *Secret History*, strange though it be, did not consider it necessary to take into account the information provided by the colophon that is no less important for dating the monument than that single fact which the aforementioned author places at the heart of his hypothesis.

In this regard, finally, it must be stated that the question undertaken by Ledyard, dating the campaigns of Yisüder and Jalairtai to Korea, cannot be regarded as definitely resolved. It demands further research by drawing on both Korean and Chinese, Mongolian and other sources able to shed light on the matter in question.

Ledyard writes that the authors of the *Secret History* thought to limit their chronicle solely to the history of the first two Khans. But he does not clarify exactly why that should have been the intent of the authors of the *Secret History*. The absence in the document of any mention of the death of Ögedei, Ledyard attempts to explain as a traditional taboo of the Mongols. But the question arises, for how long might such a taboo have remained in effect, when the monument itself, according to Ledyard, was written in 1264 or even later? One should keep in mind that the representatives of the Tolui clan hardly observed any so strict a tradition of taboo in respect of Ögedei.

A compromise solution to this thorny question about dating the monument has recently been advanced by Igor de Rachewiltz who devoted an entire article to this question (entry 269).

History and Historical Views in the *Secret History*

It has already been demonstrated by many scholars that the *Secret History* is a most valuable source for the early history of the Mongols. It would be no exaggeration to state that at present there is no serious scholarly work which in one way or another has not employed the data

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of this work. Suffice it to recall such classic works as *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion* by W. W. Bartol'd, or *Le Régime Social des Mongols* by Vladimirtsov, and others. We have therefore no particular need to speak about

the *Secret History* as a source of Mongolian history.

Another question is of greater interest to us: how did the Mongols in those distant times interpret historical events, and what was their relation to history as a whole?

Before entering on any analysis of the historical views of our monument, let us review the methods of the authors and their means of knowing history. It is necessary to consider that this work arose when history had not yet fully detached itself from the native oral tradition; it was still quite closely bound up with legend and traditionary tales, which imparted to it a kind of more or less free narration, where the living fantasy of the artistic story-teller was at times valued more highly than the accuracy of the chronicler. Under these conditions it is no wonder that Mongols at the beginning of the second millennium regarded history as a type of artistic creativity. They were in that respect no exception to the other nations of antiquity and in particular those of the Middle Ages.

In antiquity, as everyone knows, the Muse of History adorned the suite of Apollo, god of the arts (entry 127, pp. 67-68; from the Loeb edition of Aristotle's *Poetics*, §§8.9.2, p. 35):

The difference between a historian and a poet is not that one writes in prose and the other in verse. Indeed the writing of Herodotus could be put into verse and yet would still be a kind of history, whether written in metre or not. The real difference is this, that one tells what happened, and the other, what might happen.

In the same sense, the *Secret History* does not become a better example of Mongolian historical composition because it contains within it many fragmentary verses, epic passages reflecting peculiarities of Mongolian literary creativity of that time, and in the latter the historian, as has already been brilliantly proven by many prominent scholars, finds abundant factual material about events actually having taken place in Mongolian history.

Similar ideas about history among the majority

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of peoples of antiquity and the Middle Ages is explained in particular by the specifics of historical knowledge. As is well-known, history in contrast to other branches of knowledge, fulfills a dual task: side by side with generalizing and discovering regularity in the development of society, it renews, possibly more sharply and clearly, the portrait of an individual epoch and the concrete description of events, for which at an earlier stage of development of historical knowledge the second task played the fundamental role. So it was with all peoples, so it was with the Mongols.

In those times the artistic knowledge of history occupied the most important place. The anonymous authors of the *Secret History* mastered well the method of reproducing an historical image in artistic form through direct emotion-evoking action on the reader. This method of knowing history finds expression in the wide use of different kinds of Mongolian literary creativity both oral and in book form selected with the aim of re-establishing the historic past. As Kozin reck-

oned, the *Secret History* includes 122 instances of verses (entry 57, p. 33). If we compare this figure with the total number of paragraphs (282) into which the whole work is provisionally broken down, then every two paragraphs contain one set of verses. Each one of the twelve major divisions (or chapters) is a complex epic fragment, composed half in verse, half in alliteration.

Among these verses one finds epic fragments (§139, 149, 170, 186-197, 199 etc.), letters of emissaries in speeches (§105, 106, 108, 265, 266), paeans (*magtaals*, hymns of praise) (§74, 75, 146, 208-214), precepts or *surgaals* (§78, 126, 174, 276, 279), rites (§96, 102, 164), satires (§111, 179, 265), weddings (§64), nomadic topics (§118), speeches with oaths and vows (§123, 127, 147), elegies: the words of Jamuqa prior to his death, the words of Tolui before his death (§201, 272), lamentations (§203), a hymn to the guards (§230), the respectful words of the crown-prince to the ruler (§245, 254), minor verses, as proverbs, sayings and gnomic utterances (entry 57, pp. 34-35). There is no doubt that all these literary fragments, in their abundance, the diversity of themes and genres and other special features make the *Secret History* a most fascinating literary monument. In this regard it is particularly important for the fragments indicated [51]

to be organically linked with the general subject-matter and the aim of the narration; they serve as a picturesque verbal equivalent to a graphic illustration of the events described, and are the chief means of expressing historic views.

Together with this, it was precisely those artistic means, skillfully used in the *Secret History*, which made possible such a sharp reproduction of the unforgettable image of Mongolian steppe life and furnished very rich material to evaluate the different phases of this life. When the *Secret History* speaks about the dark thoughts of shaman Teb-Tengri, urging Chinggis Khan to fix on his brother Qasar for the purpose of sowing discord within the clan of the great Khan, we see here an affirmation of a possible historic fact linked to the history of the struggle between the shaman and the khan. When the monument begins to describe details of this occurrence, we encounter an exceptionally bright and dramatic picture of one of the episodes in the life of the Chinggisid clan. This episode, even if it never took place in actuality, so excellently reproduces in an artistic-emotional sense the general spirit and atmosphere of the time, that its presence in the text of the monument alongside the indisputable facts is not superfluous, but rather aids readers to taking a better grasp of the true sense of the narration (entries 57, 244-245, pp. 176-177; 270, Index, §244).

Upon close inspection of the monument it is not hard to also note a purely historical approach taken both by its authors not only to the distant past, but also to their contemporaries. Even the general structure of the composition speaks of this.

In our view, it is more correct to divide the *Secret History* in the matter of its

composition into three component parts:⁹

1. The genealogy of the ancestors of Chinggis Khan (§1-68);
2. The history of Chinggis Khan (§69-268);
3. The history of Ögedei Khan (§269-282).

The first part speaks of how the authors of the monument first of all are interested in the question of the sources of Mongolian history. And on the very first pages they indicate that this history begins with the legendary Börte Chino (the Gray Wolf). Having raised the question of the genealogy of the Mongolian Khans, the authors in this very first part illuminate the questions of the genealogical predecessors of Chinggis Khan, the origins of the Mongolian clans, the style of life of the predecessors (hunting, nomadism,

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mutual raids etc.), and cite some instructive examples from the history of individual clans and tribes. All of this is expounded solely from memory, on the basis of preserved historical traditions. Naturally, in such expositions there is much which is non-historic and legendary. Nonetheless the content of the first part as a whole reflects a real historical image.

In striving to derive the genealogy of the khan ruling at the given moment from possibly more distant ancestors, and to ground the khanate's extraordinary origins among the Mongols of that epoch, they worked out the concept of uninterrupted succession within the genealogical line of the khans. Thus, the genealogical history of Chinggis Khan was derived from the legendary Börte Chino, actually a totemistic progenitor of the Chinggisid clan. When portraying this genealogical line, there is a long chain stretching uninterruptedly from the far past down to the time described in the monument. The stories about the forebears of Chinggis Khan are conducted strictly on the principle of: from the father, the leader of the clan, to the son and successor. As a result there is an orderly genealogical history of representatives of the ruling clan, underlying the base of all Mongolian historical writing. In this history, side by side with the legendary and semi-legendary names, there are many genuine historical figures, successful leaders of the tribe and tribal unions. The closer to the time the monument was compiled, the more reliable is the information it conveys. The reality of such historical personages as Bodonchar, Qadu, Tumbiqai-sečen, Ambagai, Qabul-qagan, Qutula-qagan, Bartan-bagatur, Yesügei bagatur, and others, is beyond doubt. Working out an unbroken genealogy of the Mongolian khans on the basis of the concept of their historical sequence must be regarded as one of the attainments of the *Secret History*. Its substantial flaw is the absence of an exact chronology, though the idea of a temporal sequence was not strange to the compilers. Popular memory did not prove to be in a position to preserve more or less correct dates of events from the distant past under conditions of fast-moving and even stormy times.

⁹ As is well-known, some researchers consider that the *Secret History* consists of two basic parts (entry 57, p. 35; entry 102, p.8).

Proceeding to other materials of the first part of the monument it should be noted that the genealogical predecessors of Chinggis Khan are not turned out as a bare list of names, but

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are supplemented by information about ethnic ties and the type of life-style of clan collective groups, accounts of outstanding figures and so on. These supplements no doubt reflect the developing process of unifying the scattered Mongolian clan and tribal domains and their merger into a single over-all Mongolian state, for which one had to be able to promote the idea of a historically conditioned ethnic unity of all clans and tribes.

Thus we know that the clans of Bükünüd, Belgünüd, Qatagi, Salji'ud, and Borjigin are blood-relatives, because they derive their origins from the five sons of Dobun-Mergen and Alan-Goa (entry 57, §42, p. 83). The need to know the origins of separate tribes and clans, as well as the degree of relationship, was dictated, it is likely, by the need to arrange marriages, and other interests such as struggles with common enemies, the election of chiefs, etc. Here history is entwined with the realities of life and culture of the Mongols of that time.

The first part of the monument contains quite a few historical events, enabling us to judge what most interested the Mongols about their historical past. Let us cite for instance a story about the early life of Alan-Goa and her clan:

As for that band of people, *the matter stood thus*. The daughter of Barqudai Mergen, lord of the Kōl barqujin Lowland, was a girl called Barqujin Qo'a, and she had been given *in marriage* to Qorilartai Mergen, a chief of the Qori Tumat. At Ariq-usun, in the land of the Qori Tumat, that girl, named Alan Qo'a, was born to Barqujin Qo'a, *wife* of Qorilartai-mergen.

As in their land, the Qori Tumat had imposed bans on one another's sable, squirrel and wild game *hunting* grounds, and mutual relations were bad *as a result*, Qorilartai Mergen *separated from the Qori Tumat* and took the clan name Qorilar. Saying that the land of Burqan Qaldun was good, and that it was suitable for game hunting, he was *now moving into the territory* of the Uriangqai Burqan Bosqaqsan and Šinci Bayan, lords of Burqan Qaldun.

This is how Dobun-mergen asked there and then for Alan Qo'a, daughter of Qorilartai Mergen born at Ariq Usun, and how he took her as his wife (entry 57, §§8-9, pp. 79-80; entry 293, PFEH 4, p. 119, §8-9 as later revised).

Attention is paid likewise in the portion reviewed to specially speak of those leaders who fell at the hands of internal and external enemies, about

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their instructions to descendants, striving at the same time, as it seems to us, to evoke in the reader sympathy for the heroes of the narrative, and antipathy for their enemies. Thus, for instance, the text relates that Ambagai Khan accompanied his daughter, whom he had given in marriage, to the Tatars:

As he was taking his daughter to them in person, Ambaqai Qa'an was captured by Tatar Jüyin men. When they were on their way to deliver him to the Al-

tan-qa'an of the Kitat, Ambaqai qa'an *contrived* to send a message *using* as messenger Balaqaci, a man of the Besüt. He said to him, "Speak to Qutula, the middle one of the seven sons of Qabul qa'an, and of my ten sons speak to Qada'an Taiši." And he sent saying, "When you become qa'an of all and lord of the people, *learn* from my *example* and beware of taking your daughter in person *to her betrothed*.

I have been seized by the Tatars.

Until the nails of your five fingers

Are ground down,

Until your ten fingers are worn away,

Strive to revenge me!"

(entries 57, §254, pp. 182-183; 293, PFEH 4, §53, pp. 126-127 as later revised)

This tragic demise of one of the Mongolian khans actually took place. The laconic reports of the *Secret History* are confirmed by the more detailed data of the *Complete Collection of Histories* by Rashīd al-Dīn (entry 67, vol. 2, book 2, pp. 22-24). As though explaining what is written in the *Secret History*, the *Collection* speaks about how

the [Tatars], having made use of a fortunate circumstance, seized Qambakai-qan [Ambagai]. . . and the origin (*uruq*) of the latter derives from the tribesmen of Qabul-qan.

In consequence of this, the Tatars knew that the Chinese emperor had been offended by Qabul-qan, because the latter had slain his emissaries and comrades (*nökör*), and that [the emperor] had evil thoughts against Qabul-qan and the Mongols, all of whom were his relatives and were as one with him. That hatred towards them [deeply] penetrated the heart of the emperor. The Tatars were subordinate and subject to him. They sent Qambakai-qan to him. Likewise they themselves had towards Qambakai-qan an ancient enmity and hostility, for which reason they decided on such an impudence and adamant action. The Chinese emperor ordered Qambakai-qan to be nailed with iron nails to the "wooden donkey". . . After this Qutula-qan was dispatched with a force of Mongols to war with the Chinese emperor, and pillaged his country (entry 67, vol. 1, book 1, pp. 104-105).

The historical views of the Mongols of that time show up with special clarity in the second and third parts

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of the *Secret History*. Here the monument takes on the character of a written history. Related just to these parts are the words of Kozin about the basic portion of the chronicle "having a tendency to be an annual list of events, . . . including them in an artificial chronological framework, despite the fact that this latter portion takes up an entire forty years of the life of the chronicler and of the chief heroes of his account, Chinggis and Jamuqa" (entry 57, p. 35).

The second part begins to look like a real history, now that it is put in writing for the first time. It enables one to judge what considerable changes the oral historical creations of the Mongols underwent. The story of this or that person is converted here into a real biography; what is epic and legendary goes into the

background, yielding to more believable data, although the epic style still retains its alluring force to Mongolian ears. In this portion of the *Secret History* one may discern not only a real biography of the main hero, but also to a certain degree the status of Mongolian society at that time.

From the viewpoint of historiographic attainment, the basic parts of the *Secret History* are likewise remarkable by the fact that in them we have to deal with a quite complex presentation of chronology.

Although there are no dates here at all, the temporal sequence of events is maintained considerably better than in the foregoing part of the monument. At the outset it sets forth the events of the childhood years of Chinggis Khan, and then of his youth and maturity. Moreover, it sometimes indicates Temüjin's age at the moment of this or that event. For instance, "When Temüjin was nine years old, Joči Qasar was seven, Qači'un Elči was five, and Temüge otčigin was three, and Temülün was *still* in the cradle" (entries 57, 60-61, p. 86; 293, PFEH 4, §60, p. 129, as later revised). And similarly, "When Temüjin was nine years old, Yisügei Ba'atur set out to go to the Olqunu'ut people, relatives of Mother Hö'elün," (entries 57, *ibid.*; 293, PFEH 4, §60, p. 129, as later revised).

Further on, beginning with paragraph 141, the *Secret History* definitely takes on the character of a chronicle. It gives exact dates, expressed in the twelve-year animal cycle. Below we

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present as an example the chronology for events mentioned in the last two portions of the monument.

<i>takiya jil</i>	Fowl-Year	1201	§141-152
<i>noqai jil</i>	Dog-Year	1202	§153-165
<i>yaqai jil</i>	Swine-Year	1203	§166-192
<i>quluγana jil</i>	Mouse-Year	1204	§193-197
<i>hükr jil</i>	Ox-Year	1205	§198-201
<i>bars jil</i>	Tiger-Year	1206	§202-238
<i>ta'ulai jil</i>	Hare-Year	1207	§239-246
<i>qonin jil</i>	Sheep-Year	1211	§247-250
<i>noqai jil</i>	Dog-Year	1214	§251-256
<i>ta'ulai jil</i>	Hare-Year	1219	§257-263
<i>takiya jil</i>	Fowl-Year	1225	§264
<i>noqai jil</i>	Dog-Year	1226	§266-268
<i>quluγana jil</i>	Mouse-Year	1228	§269-271
<i>ta'ulai jil</i>	Hare-Year	1231	§272-281
<i>quluγana jil</i>	Mouse-Year	1240	§282

From the data cited above it is clear that in the *Secret History* the most important events in Mongolian history, beginning from 1201, are set forth in strict chronological order. In §202, for instance, the Tiger-Year is indicated as the date of founding of the Mongolian State. Under the heading of 1207 in §239 it communicates the struggle between Chinggis-Khan and Teb-Tengri, which ended in the defeat of the celebrated shaman; in §247-250 the events of 1211 are set forth.

The basic portions of the *Secret History* are devoted to events which were a reality at that time. As testimony to this fact, the entrance of the Mongols into the historical arena attracted increased interest in fixing events of the time. Together with this, it heightened the need for representatives of the ruling class to immortalize their deeds, to enlarge themselves and their relatives in the eyes of contemporaries and descendants. With such aims they fell back on the services of chroniclers, or more correctly, *bitegčis*, who henceforth had to occupy themselves first and foremost with contemporary affairs, the history of the functioning khans.

These new duties set before the chroniclers made the writing of history a more active and concrete form of knowledge, than the old oral historical tradition, which was a collection of legends and traditional tales about events of the past. As an historical monument, the *Secret History* is remarkable for the fact that in it one can still trace things back even at this juncture. If its first portion, operating with

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traditional tales, could evoke a national memory about the more remote historical past, then its other parts, devoted to contemporary affairs, could firmly base themselves on genuine historical facts.

These facts brought about a change in the traditional tales, which also meant establishing history as a branch of knowledge. A new view of the role and significance of facts is expressed in the *Secret History*. The question naturally arises, what about the sources from which these facts were drawn? In our view they can be taken from two possible sources. Some data, especially for the first period of the life of Chinggis Khan, are for the greater part based on oral eyewitness accounts of contemporaries closely acquainted with Chinggis, probably his relatives. And these data, in view of their nearness in time to the events described, and the good knowledge of the situation by these informants, substantially differ from earlier oral traditional tales by the degree of their reliability. Keeping this in mind one may assume that on the whole there can be no doubt among researchers about events of the childhood and youth of Temüjin.

Another source for the *Secret History* consists of documentary materials from the headquarters of Chinggis-Khan and Ögedei. On an attentive reading it is not hard to notice that the monument makes use of orders and decrees of the Khans, reports from emissaries, court memos, official papers and the like. Recognizing written documents as an important type of historical source had a significant effect on the future development of Mongolian historical knowledge. The use of sources of written history took a turn for the better. It follows from this, indeed before all else, that it ties together the growth of reliability in the information communicated with the appearance of a chronology in the basic portions of the monument. In places one encounters extracts from orders and decrees of Chinggis-Khan (e.g., about the appointment of the 95 chiliarchs, with an exact enumeration of their names and indication of their origins, about the creation of the *kesig*-guard corps, its rules and duties), and likewise from the decrees of Ögedei

about the privileges and obligations of the Khan's Guard, about the institution of the *urton*-service, and so on (entry 57, §202, 204, 278, 279,280).

A detailed history of the unified Mongolian state's creation, clarification in a condensed form of the campaigns of Chinggis

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Khan and Ögedei against the countries of Central and Inner Asia, as well as in Southern Rus, a rather exact listing of geographical names, all serve as additional proof that the basic sections of the chronicle could not have been written by a single oral witness, but were for the most part based on written and documentary data.

Let us try to analyze just which historical questions are elucidated in the chronicle and how they are explained. Let us select from these questions the following ones: Temüjin's struggle to unify the Mongols into a single state and his election to the throne of all the Mongols; the structure of the Mongolian state; external campaigns of Chinggis, and finally, the history of Ögedei.

Such an analysis will make it possible to get better acquainted with the historical views of the chronicle compilers. A skillful selection of data displaying the activity of the main hero, is already indication by itself of a new approach by the authors to historical narration, their understanding of the significance of historical events and facts, and the expediency of including them in the chronicle.

It is precisely this new idea of history, it seems to us, which guided the authors and enabled them to state the most important events in the life not only of Chinggis Khan and his clan, but also of Mongolian society as a whole. Strictly speaking, the struggle of the young Temüjin to establish the rights of the Borjigid clan was in an objective sense also a struggle to establish the powerful authority of the khan, enabling him to unite all the Mongolian tribes into one state.

Thus the *Secret History* is devoted to one of the main and most current problems of the history of the early 13th century, the history of creating the Mongolian state.

The concept of Mongolian statehood, one of the most important historical ideas of this monument, is the most powerful attainment of the historical knowledge of the Mongols of that time. True, this conceptual basis of the *Secret History* is nowhere formulated specifically in the shape of a complex historical procedure but it is not hard to get an impression of it when analyzing the basic data of the monument. This fact, that first and foremost it relates the genealogical history of the Mongolian khans, already of itself bears witness to the strengthened interest in history of the ruling

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elite, personified by the khans. In those times the supreme power could be thought of solely as the khan's power. The state and the khan were synonymous in the minds of people in those days. For this reason the history of creating the state is presented in the monument as a history of establishing an all-Mongolian khan power through unification of the different Mongolian tribes and nations under the guiding Borjigid clan.

The history of the struggle to create a state is presented truthfully and realistically. The young and energetic Temüjin begins to subject one Mongolian fief after another to himself, now by armed might, now through diplomatic means. This fight was hard, at times bloody, and required immense effort and sacrifice. Two opposing forces arose: one, headed by Temüjin, came forward to unite all the Mongols, and the other, representing the interests of the conservative circles of the clan and tribal aristocracy, struggled to retain the old order.

The childhood and youth of the future Mongolian Khan is described with great artistic expressiveness: the reader is, as it were, prepared for stories about the imminent forceful actions of Chinggis in establishing his paternal *ulus* and in unification of all the Mongolian fiefs. It was they, the Tatars, who poisoned his father, Yesügei-bagatur, and left Hö'elün-eke with five children in an impoverished situation. It was they, the Taichi'uts, who nomadized away from the widow of Yesügei-bagatur, having abandoned her to the mercy of fate, and then kidnapped Temüjin while he was yet a juvenile and held him against his will until a fortunate circumstance enabled him to flee. And finally, young Temüjin, who had lived through all kinds of hardships and difficulties, ambitious, harboring an implacable hatred for his enemies, became Chinggis-Khan, and achieved his goals in a harsh and blood-filled clash with the opponents of the unified state.

The basic intent of Chinggis-Khan, if we are to believe the *Secret History*, was to "direct the state of many tongues onto the path of truth" and to bring it "under his reins alone" (entries 57, §224, p. 168; 270, Index, p. 128). Dominant in the *Secret History* is the idea that a unified Mongolian state was a guaranty "of general welfare", in which the period of "strife among all the people"

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in Mongolia would be ended. The idea of peace and harmony among the Mongolian tribal groups was becoming a real possibility and an important goal for many at that time. It found expression in the mood and expectations of the Mongolian national masses, who had endured not only the hardships of steppe life, but also the endless internecine wars during the period of disassociation.

In our view, the positive reaction of those who supported the unificatory activity of Chinggis-Khan is quite clearly reflected in the message To'oril Khan of the Kereit sent to his *anda*, Chinggis-Khan:

To make my son Temüjin qan is indeed right. How can the Mongols live without a qan? *In future*

Do not break this, your agreement,

Do not dissolve your bond,

Do not tear off your collar!

(entries 57, §126, p. 111; 293, PFEH 5, p. 166, §126, as revised.)

The difficult position of Mongolia in the pre-State period is described in the following fashion:

The starry sky was turning upon itself,

The many people were in turmoil ...
 They did not lie on their coverlets *to rest*,
 But attacked each other.

(entries 57, §254, pp.183-84; 293, PFEH 30, p. 90, §254 as revised)

From the quotation cited it is evident that the monument gives an evaluation of the contemporary situation in contrast with the past, and this evaluation quite agrees with the objective course of social development in Mongolia toward unity.

In conclusion, everything that is said about the victorious struggle of Chinggis Khan for the throne of all the Mongols, the *Secret History* describes in the tragic end of the major rival of Chinggis, his one-time *anda*, Jamuqa. It explains that in the fight against Chinggis, Jamuqa suffered a complete defeat, was abandoned by his people and given to Chinggis by five of his cohorts. This led to his

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former *anda*, Jamuqa, publicly acknowledging his guilt and in noble fashion asking Chinggis to execute him promptly. Jamuqa's words, pronounced before his execution and addressed to Chinggis, sound like the concluding notes of confession of a man convinced of the senselessness of opposing everything which came out against the single-state authority of an all-Mongolian khan (entry 57, §201, p. 158).

One should observe the great attention which the *Secret History* devotes to the history of creation and construction of the single Mongolian state. As if of a very great event, it speaks about founding the state in the Tiger-Year (1206) at the Grand Assembly (§202):

And so, when the people of the felt-walled tents had been brought to allegiance, in the Year of the Tiger (1206), they *all* gathered at the source of the *Onan River*. They hoisted the white standard with nine tails and there they gave Cinggis qa'an the title of qan. . . . Having *thus* set in order the Mongolian people, Cinggis qa'an said, "To those who sided with me when I was establishing *our nation*, I will express my appreciation and, having formed units of one thousand men, I shall appoint them leaders of a thousand" (entry 293, PFEH 18, p. 25, §202 as later revised).

Then it enumerates by name all 95 noyons whom Chinggis Khan named *chil-iarchs*.

Further, he [i.e., Chinggis Qa'an] entrusted Šigi-Qutuqu with *the power of judgement* over all, and said to him "Of the entire people

Chastising the robber,

Checking the liar,

execute those who deserve death, punish those who deserve punishment"

(entries 57, §203, pp. 113-114; 293, PFEH 18, p. 27, §203).

The materials about Chinggis's formation of a personal guard-corps are interesting (§226-230); as Vladimirtsov pointed out, this was a direct result of the earlier

bands of *nökörs* and detachments of bodyguards of the tribal khans. The Guard of Chinggis Khan was a military organization of the khan, which was converted into a powerful military institution.

It is curious that through the mouth of Chinggis's wife, in a casual way, it seems to us, she expresses in the monument

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a certain disquietude about the fate of the Mongolian state in connection with the preparations for Chinggis Khan's campaign to distant Turkestan:

The qa'an has thought of
Establishing order over his many people,
Climbing high passes,
Crossing wide rivers
And waging a long campaign.
But living beings born to this world are not eternal: When your
body, like a great old tree,
Will fall down,
To whom will you bequeath your people
Which is like tangled hemp?
When your body, like the stone base of a pillar,
Will collapse,
To whom will you bequeath your people
Which is like a flock of birds?

Of your four heroic sons whom you have begotten, which one will you designate as your successor? I have given you this advice on what, thinking about it, we the sons, younger brothers, the many common people and my bad self understood to be an important question. Your order (= word) shall decide!" (entries 57, §254, p. 301; 293, PFEH 30, p. 88-89, § 254, as later revised).

It is noteworthy that the *Secret History* speaks in detail about the sharp discussion which took place among the sons of Chinggis as to whom their father ought to name as successor to the throne. This question concerned all the sons of Chinggis. And only the Khan could decide this question. He compelled his sons to come to an agreement and approve the designation of Ögedei as successor to the throne.

This dramatic scene, so clearly sketched in §254, anticipated future clashes among the descendants of Chinggis Khan. The *Secret History*, alongside the story of creating the Mongolian state, likewise deals with the matter of its future, when the founder of that state would be no more.

The history of campaigns by Chinggis Khan and Ögedei Khan, briefly sketched in the *Secret History*, bears witness to how the ruling class of the Mongols maintained an interest in expanding its sphere of influence. The data in the monument likewise say that Mongolian historiography at the moment of its birth had at its disposal sufficiently reliable geographical information about many countries of Inner and Central Asia, and partly of Europe. At the present time, for

the most part, the modern correspondences of place

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names found in the *Secret History* have been established, and their etymological meaning has been clarified in quite a few cases.

Let us cite some examples (following Igor de Rachewiltz, *Index to the Secret History of the Mongols*, (entry 270):

Kitad or Jürčid	Northern China
Solangyas	Korea
Tangyud	Minyaq
Fu-jou	Fu-chou
Čabčiyal	Chü-yung-kuan, Chinese fortress
Šira dektür	Lung-hu-t'ai
Jungdu	Chung-tu (Peking)
Dunčan	Tung-ching
Dungčang	Tung-ch'ang
Sarta'ul	Turkestan
Buqar	Bukhara
Semisgab/Semisgen	Samarkand
Ürünggeči	Urgench
Isebur	Nishapur
Aru-lru	Iru-Herat
Maru	Merv
Baqtat	Baghdad
Hindus	Hindustan, India
Sin-müren	Indus (river)
Ejil	Volga
Erdes	Irtys
Jayag Yaik	Ural river
Kanglin / Ganglin	Name of a Turkic people in the basin of the Syr-Darya
Kibčat	Kipchak, Polovetsians
Orus(ut)	Russians
Majarat	Magyars, Hungarians
Serkesüt	Cirkassians
Bolar	Bulgarians and others.

We have already observed above that the history of external campaigns takes up relatively little space in the *Secret History*. The first to notice this was Kozin, in whose words the chronicle "has little interest in Chinggis Khan's undertakings of conquest beyond the borders of Mongolian countries and peoples," and speaks of them "dryly, inconsistently and without the least enthusiasm" (entry 57, pp. 52-53). The monument merely registers the basic military events. There the reader will find no sharply defined episodes nor epic digressions such as are so richly wrought in the sections devoted to internal history. Such a chronicle ought,

one would think, to express thoughts to some degree justifying or glorifying the military plans and actions of Chinggis Khan. But these are not there either. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that the *Secret History* was intended above all else to be a family history of the "Golden Clan."

Speaking of factual data touching on the history of military battles, one should emphasize their historical reliability. It is easy to be convinced of this by comparing them with what is said in other sources, in the works of Juvayni, Rashīd al-Dīn and others (entry 57, §270, §274, pp. 191-196, 268-270).

The concluding paragraphs of the *Secret History* (§§269-282) are devoted to relating the rule of Ögedei as khan (1228-1241). These differ considerably from the preceding

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ones both in manner of exposition as well as in style. Everything artistic and epic fully yields place to what is actual and historic. The *Secret History* clearly observes a general tendency which is in common to this particular monument: the closer the events are to the time of compilation, the more distinct does the history as such begin to dominate other forms of literary creation.

The exposition of the khanship of Ögedei is a condensed tale about the most important events with no frills. It creates the impression that when the monument was written these happenings were well-known to everyone; they had taken place under the eyes of contemporaries and for this reason the author considered it permissible to restrict himself to the shortest possible elaboration. One feels that Ögedei Khan is striving to observe the traditional Mongolian respect of a son for his father: the chief matter in the *Secret History* ought to be the history of the famed father, and as for what concerns the son, his history should be an illustration of devotion to the memory and precepts of his father. Whatever the son may have done, all served to fulfill these precepts, culminating in the name of his "grand deeds." In one of his decrees Ögedei Khan says:

We shall not cause suffering to the nation that Our father Činggis qa'an established with *so much* toil. We shall make *the people* rejoice, causing them to rest

Their feet upon the ground,

Their hands upon the soil.

Sitting now on the throne made ready by Our father the qa'an, so that people do not suffer (entries 57, 279, p. 197; 293, 279, PFEH 31, p. 38, as later revised).

In another place he says, "I have sat on the throne made ready by my father Činggis qa'an. Will people not say of me, By what merit has he sat on it. If Elder Brother Ča'adai agrees, since our father the qahan has left matters with the Altan Qan of the Kitat people unfinished, I shall now move against the Kitat people" (entries 57, 271, p. 192; 293, 271, PFEH 31, pp. 27-28, as later revised).

Characteristically, at the conclusion of the *Secret History* the lips of Ögedei Khan sum up as it were everything spoken of in the pages of the chronicle: "After my father the qa'an, I have indeed added four good deeds to his, and four deeds *of mine* were surely faults". Further, as everyone knows, the Khan briefly

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enumerated his four "good deeds," and his four "faults" (entries 57, §281, pp.198-199; 293, PFEH 31, p. 43, 281).

Ögedei Khan's speeches may bewilder the reader. Can it be that the ruling Khan personally "repented" his errors? This is quite possible if one considers the following circumstance. The *Secret History* was written under the son, Ögedei, primarily as a history of Chinggis Khan's reign. Being the initiator of this document, Ögedei could at any suitable moment emphasize his insignificance as an individual before the presence of his father; he could "give an account of himself" as, adhering to the spirit of the latter in all his deeds. This completely matches the shamanic tradition.

It is well-known that in ancient times, when worshipping the *ongyon* (idol), the shaman, having rendered due respect to the deceased, always spoke about himself, about his worthy affairs and transgressions, as if he were giving an account of himself before the spirit of his predecessor. One may assume that this purely shamanic tradition also stipulated the unique ending of the chronicle. Faced with such a detailed exposition of the history of his predecessor, Ögedei Khan could but briefly and in a "spirit of self-criticism" appraise his actions against the background of this history.

History and Political Ideas in the *Secret History*

It is characteristic of the *Secret History* not only to register, but also to interpret historical events, thus expressing definite ideas and aspirations of its own time. In this respect, it is the most complete historical work that ever appeared among nomadic peoples.

It is obvious that the philosophy of history in the book is purely shamanistic. Its main political ideas have been formulated from the viewpoint of shamanism, the indigenous faith of the Mongol nomads. If one deals with the book thoroughly, one can discover, once in a while, sophisticated ideas concerning not only history, but the theory of statehood in Mongolia. For instance, the *Secret History* recorded the earliest known speculation on the subject of the origin and nature of political authority in Mongolia, and this theory strongly reminds us of the divine origin of the state theory among other peoples of antiquity. As is well-known, the Hindus, the Chinese, the Christians and others all subscribed to the view that the origin of political authority has a divine sanction. The divine origin of the royal power of Chinggis Khan is attested differently in two places of the book. First, in the very beginning of the book, it states that Börte čino, the forebear of Chinggis Khan's clan, was "born with his destiny *ordained* by Heaven Above" (entry 293, PFEH 4, §1, p. 118).

All this shows that the origin of the khan's power for the Chinggisids was initially sanctioned by Heaven or Tengri which, according to shamanism, is the highest being governing the world and directing the affairs of men. Dr. Igor de Rachewiltz has pointed out the possibility of influence from the traditional Chi-

nese doctrine of the mandate of Heaven (*t'ien ming*) on the Mongolian concept of Heaven evidenced in the *Secret History*.¹⁰ In principle sharing this view, I nevertheless have to note the following. As I have written elsewhere, the worship of Heaven was originally characteristic of shamanism; it could not have been borrowed from anywhere else. But the very idea of sanctioning the power of the sole khan in Mongolia by means of a more sophisticated theory might have, in the final phase of its evolution, been inspired by the more developed political doctrine of its nearest neighbor.

Thus, when the Mongols began to record the history of the great founder of the Mongol Empire, the old totem-origin theory of a clan leader might have been re-interpreted in the light of the Heavenly Mandate doctrine of the Chinese, the closeness of which to the Mongolian worship of Heaven could easily be understood (Börte čino, the "wolf," was "born with his destiny ordained by Heaven above").

Second, in some lines after the first paragraphs of this book, one can find another story about the divine origin of khanship in Mongolia:

Dobun Mergen asked there and then for Alan Qo'a, daughter of Qorilartai Mergen . . . born at Ariq Usun and . . . she bore him two sons called Būgūnūtei and Belgūnūtei. . . . Before long, Dobun Mergen died. After his death, Alan Qo'a, although she had no husband, bore three sons who were named Buqu Qatagi, Buqatu Salji and Bodončar Mungqaq.

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Belgūnūtei and Būgūnūtei, the two sons born earlier to Dobun Mergen, said to each other, behind the back of their mother Alan Qo'a, "Although this mother of ours is without brothers-in-law and male relatives, without a husband she has borne these three sons. In the house there is only the man of the Ma'aliq Baya'ut. Surely these three sons are his." Their mother Alan Qo'a knew what they had been saying to each other behind her back. . . ."

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Then their mother Alan Qo'a said, "You, my sons Belgūnūtei and Būgūnūtei, are suspicious of me and said to each other, 'These three sons that she has borne, of whom, of what clan, are they the sons?' And it is right for you to be suspicious. *Every night, a resplendent yellow man entered by the light of the smoke-hole or the doortop of the tent, he rubbed my belly and his radiance penetrated my womb. When he departed, he crept out on a moonbeam or a ray of sun in the guise of a yellow dog* (Emphasis added, Sh.B.).

How can you speak so rashly?
When one understands that, the sign is *clear* :
They are the sons of Heaven.
How can you speak, comparing them
To *ordinary* black-headed men?
When they become the rulers of all,

¹⁰ Igor de Rachewiltz, "Some remarks on the ideological foundations of Chinggis Khan's power," PFEH 7 (March, 1973), pp. 21-26 (entry 312).

Then the common people will understand!"

(entries 57, pp. 80-81; 293, §§1, 9, 17-22, pp. 118-119, as later revised)

The same story was retold in a somewhat different variant by the Persian historian Rashīd al-Dīn. It runs as follows:

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They [the Mongols, Sh. B.] assert that the responsibility [for this lies] on the narrator, that Alan-Goa some little time after this, when her husband was gone, was sleeping once at home. And there through the [same] opening of the tent came a beam of light that plunged into her womb. . . . After some time she perceived that she was pregnant. When the time came to be delivered of this pregnancy, her brothers and the kinfolk of her husband gathered and said: "How is it possible that a woman without a husband has surreptitiously conducted herself with a man and become pregnant?!" Alan-Goa in reply said [to them]: "Inasmuch as I have borne a child without a husband, a circumstance might exist [in reality] in which your presupposition was appropriate and the suspicion you harbor was seemingly correct. But there is no doubt that 'in truth, some suspicions are a sin.' How could I conduct [such a] mis-step, so worthy of scorn, one which would serve as a cause for shame? Any suspicion which you nurture respecting me is false! These sons which I bore belong to a special class [of beings]. When they grow up and become lords and khans of the entire people, they will be defined and explained for you and other subject tribes, how my circumstances came to be!" Three sons appeared on earth from Alan-Goa . . . The name of the youngest [son] was Bodonchar-kaan, the clan [*nasab*] of Chinggis Khan goes back to him (entry 67, vol. 1, book 2, pp. 12-13).

As is evident from the texts cited above, the basic content of the story of Alan-Go'a is alike in all, and focuses on the same topic, that is, the genealogy of Chinggis Khan goes back to a supernatural origin, this time to *light*. This topic deserves special attention. In one place in his work, Rashīd al-Dīn made a very interesting remark, with regard to the fact that those who originated from the three sons whom Alan-Go'a bore from light were called *nirun*, that is "womb", and that this was a hint at the existence of immaculate wombs, since these children were conceived from light (entry 67, vol. 1, book 1, p. 272).

It is obvious that the legend of Alan-Goa's immaculate conception from light was another attempt of the Mongols to show the divine nature of their supreme political authority. This theory, which could be called the "light origin theory of the Khan's power," was a more advanced political notion, compared with that of the totem origin of the Mongol khanship, with Bōrte čino, the wolf, being an ancestor of the Chinggisids.

In my previous works¹¹ I tried to argue that the initiative of the authors of the

¹¹ Sh. Bira, "Historiographical Relationship between India and Mongolia," in *Mongolia: Culture, Economy and Politics* (New Delhi: Khama Publishers, 1992), pp. 23-30 (entry 313).

Secret History to attribute the origin of the Chinggisids to the miraculous action of light could have been the result of Zoroastrian-Manichaean influence upon early Mongolian historical thought. This might have occurred through the Uighurs, whose theory of the khan's origin from light was ultimately inspired by the Manichaean cult of light (as is well-known, Manichaeism was once dominant among the Uighurs).

Generally speaking, the *Secret History* is ideologically more predetermined, insofar as it deals with the deeds of Chinggis Khan. It contains rather developed ideas of the historical necessity for a united statehood, under the rule of a single khan of the Chinggisids. Rulership by a sole khan was a symbol and guarantee of Mongol nationhood.

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The *Secret History* says: "How can you Mongols live without a qan?" (entry 293, PFEH 5, p. 166, §126). The words of Tayan-qan of the Naiman, the powerful rival of Chinggis Khan, speak eloquently of the same idea: "I am told that yonder east are a few Mongols. Do they now want to be rulers themselves? Even if there are two shining lights, the sun and moon are indeed there. Yet how can there be two rulers on earth. Let us go and bring here those few Mongols!" (entry 293, PFEH 18, pp. 46-47, §189).

The *Secret History* reflects the idea that the khan's sovereignty is indivisible and incontestable. The book bears witness to how Chinggis Khan demonstrated the power of the khan over that of Teb-Tengri, the supreme shaman.

What is more, the *Secret History* bears witness not only to the fact that the interests of the shamanist ideologists and of Chinggis Khan coincided, but also about instances when these interests diverged sufficiently that Chinggis had to ruthlessly repress the shamans, taking no heed of their authority nor of the will of Eternal Heaven. We recall the tragic case of the shaman Teb-Tengri (Kökčü), the elder son of Möngliq, stepfather of Chinggis. Teb-Tengri was famed as a great shaman who consorted with spirits, rose to Heaven and had powerful protector-spirits. He enjoyed considerable confidence from Chinggis-Khan himself. But Teb-Tengri, making use of his position, eventually began to contend for supreme power in the Empire and openly encroached on the prerogatives of Chinggis Khan. Having squabbled with Qasar, the brother of Chinggis, Teb Tengri presented himself before the Khan and declared to him:

The decree of Eternal Heaven concerning the ruler has been foretold by heavenly signs *as follows*: once they [i.e., the signs] said that Temüjin will hold the nation, once that Qasar *will*. If you don't strike at Qasar by surprise, there is no knowing *what will happen!* (entries 57, §244, p. 176; 293, PFEH 26, p. 48, §244).

That was a clear attempt to provoke a conflict between Chinggis and his

Sh. Bira, "The Mongolian conception of Chinggis Khan", in Sh. Bira: *Studies in Mongolian History, Culture and Historiography: Selected Papers* (Tokyo, 1994), pp. 413-414 (entry 314).

brother (same entry). But Teb-Tengri did not stop at this. He actively prepared for the realization of his ambitious plans. The shaman's position quickly strengthened, and around him there gathered numerous adherents from the aristocracy and the simple folk.

"After that, the 'people of the nine tongues' gathered under Teb Tenggeri," says the *Secret History* in §245. And once Teb-Tengri was so bold as to offend the younger brother of Chinggis, Otchigin, who tearfully told the Khan of what had come to pass (entries 57, §245, p. 177; 293, PFEH 26, p. 50, §245).

Then Chinggis Khan's wife, Börte-ujin, declared to the Khan: "What are these Qongqotan doing? They recently ganged up and beat [70]

Qasar. And now, why do they make this Otchigin kneel down behind them? What kind of behavior is this?" . . .

When your body, like a great old tree

Will fall down,

Whom will they let govern your people? . . .

How can people covertly injure your younger brothers like this . . . (entries 57, p.178; 293, PFEH 26, p.51, §245, as later revised).

Having finally understood what a grave danger threatened him from Teb-Tengri, Chinggis Khan was able to employ the shaman's own weapon, the ideology of shamanism, against him. So as to justify this step, organizing the slaying of the shaman, and to give advance notice of his intentions to the people, Chinggis declared: "Because Teb Tenggeri laid hands on my younger brothers and spread baseless slanders among them in order to sow discord, he was no longer loved by Heaven, and his life, together with his body, has been taken away" (entries 57, §246, pp. 178-179; 293, PFEH 26, p. 53, §246).

By this declaration Chinggis wanted to show that the power of the khan was superior to everyone and everything, that he might punish anyone who thought to rise up against him or against his kinsmen, that Heaven was protecting him as khan even more than the shaman himself—the living embodiment of the will of Heaven. The *Secret History*, as we see, reveals a real displacement of traditional Mongolian views. Before, when the positions of shamanism were strong and immovable, the inviolability of shamans and *magi*, who usually stood at the head of their clans, was generally accepted and was an indisputable law, but after the Mongol state was established, they forfeited their superior status and were compelled to subject themselves to the will of the all-powerful khan.

Some other principles of shamanism likewise underwent change. Thus, Blue Heaven in these new circumstances was invoked to protect not only the shaman, but the khan as well, and even more. In our view, the conflict between Chinggis and Teb-Tengri reflects the latter, concluding stage of a conflict between adherents of the new khan power, and the representatives of the old shamanist tradition.

Chinggis's reference to the will of Heaven, which had sanctioned the slaying

of Teb-Tengri, was merely a cunning

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cover-up of the true reason for why he had moved so harshly against the noted shaman:

Činggis qa'an then railed at Father Mönglik saying, "By not restraining your sons' nature, you and your sons began thinking that you were equal to me, and you have paid for this with Teb Tenggeri's life. If I had known that you had such a nature, you would have been dealt with like Jamuqa, Altan, Qučar and others" (entry 57, §246, p. 179; entry 293, PFEH 26, p.53, §246 as revised).

He added more graciously "Had you restrained your ambitious nature, who among Father Mönglik's offspring would have considered himself equal to me?" After he had destroyed Teb Tenggeri, the *proud* air of the Qongqotan was much reduced (entry 293, *loc.cit.*). An analysis of the *Secret History* convinces one that its author used shamanism not in defense of persisting local interests, but to affirm autocratic khan power in the person of Chinggis.

An interesting detail here deserves notice, one showing that the chronicle strives to justify the selection of Chinggis and not Jamuqa for the khan's throne. Qorci, who had in consequence become one of the closest cohorts of Chinggis Khan, said to him:

A heavenly sign appeared before my *very* eyes, revealing the future to me. There came a fallow cow. She circled Jamuqa and struck his tent-cart with her horns; *then she* butted him *too*, breaking one of her two horns... *Then* a hornless and fallow ox lifted up the great shaft under the tent, harnessed it on to himself and . . . as he proceeded following Temüjin on the wide road, he kept bellowing:

Together Heaven and Earth have agreed:
Temüjin shall be lord of the people!" and
I am drawing near carrying *the people* and
Bringing it to him.

These heavenly signs appeared before my eyes (entries 57, 121, p. 107; 293, PFEH 5, p. 162, §121, as later revised).

The *Secret History* is witness to the fact that Chinggis Khan, being a shamanist and remaining as such throughout his entire life, firmly believed in the intervention of Eternal Heaven to determine his destiny, and he strove in every way [69]

to have a similar representation affirmed throughout all his empire."By the strength of Eternal Heaven, my strength and power have now been increased by Heaven and Earth and I have brought the whole people to allegiance, causing them to come under my sole rule, so now choose men to serve on roster as day-guards . . ." (entries 57, §224, p.168; 293, PFEH 23, p.120, §224). In another place he repeats this thought: ". . . since I enjoyed the protection of Eternal Heaven, I subdued the Kereyit people and, indeed, gained the high throne" (entry

57, §187, p. 141; entry 293, PFEH 18, p. 44, §187).

Another political idea is no less clearly expressed in this monument—the loyalty of subjects (*arats*) and *nökörs* (cohorts) to their *noyons* (lords) and khans, an idea brought forth to affirm and strengthen relations of hierarchical subordination in society. Many places in the monument speak of this in connection with the most diverse events, and it is set forth, as a rule, from the mouth of Chinggis Khan himself. Let us cite some examples. At the time the Tayichi'ut were destroyed, Old Man Shirgü'etü of the Nichügüt-Ba'arin and his sons captured the Taichi'ut prince Tarqutai-kiriltuq, and were about to convey him to Chinggis. But one of the sons of Old Man Shirgü'etü, Naya'a, said:

If we arrive holding this Tarqutai *captive*, Činggis qa'an will say *of us* that we came having laid hands on our rightful master. Činggis qa'an will say of us: "How trustworthy a people are these who come having laid hands on their rightful master? . . . People who lay hands on their rightful master must be cut down!" . . . It would be better if we freed Tarqutai and sent him away from here, and only ourselves went to Chinggis-qahan to say, "We have come to offer our strength. We had seized Tarqutai and were *coming* here, but we could not make away with our rightful master. . . . So we freed him . . . and we have come respectfully to offer our strength to you." Let us say *this!* (entry 57, §149, p. 121; entry 293, PFEH 13, p. 43, §149 as later revised).

The kinsmen did as Naya'a proposed. And Chinggis Khan said to them when he met them: "If you had come, having laid hands . . .

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on your rightful master, you and your offspring would have been cut down. Your thought that you could not make away with your rightful master is right" (entries 57, §149, p. 121; 293, PFEH 13, pp.43-44, §149, as later revised). In another place it talks about Kököčü, who had betrayed his master, so as to go over to Chinggis's side. Chinggis Khan declared: "As for the equerry Kököčü himself, who comes here having in this manner abandoned his rightful master, who would now trust such a man and take him for a companion?" (entries 57, §188, pp.141-142; 293, PFEH 13, pp. 45-46, §188, as later revised).

Finally, there is a story about how five companions of Jamuqa seized him and dragged him to Chinggis. "When Jamuqa was brought here by his companions," he told *someone* to say to his sworn brother the khan:

Black crows have gone so far
As to catch a 'qarambai' duck,
Black skins [=commoners] and slaves have gone so far
As to lay hands on their lord.
Qa'an, my sworn friend,
How can you be mistaken? (entries 57, §200, p. 154; 293, PFEH 21, p.21,
§200, as revised).

To this Chinggis Khan replied: "How could we let men live who have raised

their hands against their rightful master. To whom can such men be companions? Exterminate to the offspring of *their offspring* these people who have raised their hands against their rightful master!" (entries 57, §200, p. 155; 293, PFEH 21, p. 21, §200). And right there, before Jamuqa's eyes, he slew the arats who had encroached on him, and for Jamuqa himself, handed over by his subjects, Chinggis even wished to be merciful, but Jamuqa declined to be pardoned.

The *Secret History* is the Outstanding Monument of Mongolian Historiography

Researchers have characterized the *Secret History* in various ways. I. N. Berezin called it "a Mongolo-Chinese chronicle" (entry 48, p. 1). W. W. Bartol'd, regarding such a definition as unrewarding, related the monument to the "works of a bogatyr epic" (entry 132, pp. 90-91). He maintained that the *Secret History* "distinguished itself from every other chronicle by the fact that the narrative does not go by years, and the chronology of events is very indefinite and confused" (entry 132, pp. 90-91). It is not possible in this respect not to observe that the great Orientalist clearly underrated the significance of the *Secret History* as a source for Mongolian history.

Vladimirtsov gave the most correct statement of the character of this monument:

Actually, the *Yüan-ch'ao pi-shih* [i.e., the *Secret History*—Sh. B.] forms a special source of data about Chinggis Khan, based on the oral traditions closest to his times, and imbued with epic motifs. Nonetheless, the work cannot be regarded as a genuine epic and be related to it as to one which is exclusively epic in nature. The *Secret History* reveals itself to be a chain of epic stories, re-worked with a purpose—the goal of making it be the cherished traditional tale of the House of Chinggis Khan, its history. . . . On the basis of the epic *Secret History* one may form judgments about the life of the Mongolian aristocracy in the same way as in India and use the *Odyssey* to learn about the life of the ancient Greek *basileus*. But the *Secret History* is far more prosaic than the poems of Homer, and approaches more closely the "epic chronicle" type, although

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this is because, despite the assertion of Bartol'd, narration in the *Yüan-ch'ao pi-shih* (*Secret History*) does go on according to years, beginning with 1201, which has been observed by Palladius. The *Secret History* tells the story of the clan from which Chinggis Khan sprang, and sketches widely and freely a picture of steppe life, furnishing abundant material to form judgments about various aspects of Mongolian life in the 12th-13th centuries. The *Secret History* for this reason may be characterized not as a "production of the bogatyr epic," but as a history-chronicle, transmitted in epic style, and pervaded with "the aroma of the steppe" (entry 145, pp. 6-8).

Professor Francis W. Cleaves, who made the first full English translation, pointed out that "The *Secret History of the Mongols* is not only the capital

monument of thirteen-century Mongolian literature, but it is one of the great literary monuments of the world."¹²

The *Secret History* is unconditionally an original historical creation of the Mongols which not only illumines the basic events of their early history, but also expresses the most important historical-political ideas of the Mongols at the turning point of their history.

The *Secret History*, along with its peculiarities, is clearly different from the typical annual chronicle of Mediaeval Europe, and from the Oriental annals, the Chinese and Tibetan in particular. This monument bears witness to the fact that from the moment it arose, Mongolian historical writing bore an independent national character, which had arisen and developed in a typical nomadic milieu. The *Secret History* is the only historical work of its kind created by the nomadic peoples of Central Asia. With its birth the historical knowledge of Mongolian nomadic peoples acquired a definitive formulation of written history, and reached the apogee of its development. Universal acknowledgment of this book as a great monument of Mongolian literature and history has been noted by UNESCO, in its resolution adopted in connection with the 750th anniversary of the *Secret History*, which the international community commemorated in 1990.¹³

¹² *The Secret History of the Mongols*, translated by Francis W. Cleaves, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. xi (entry 315).

¹³ Sh. Bira, *Nuuts Tovčoo bol Mongolyn tүүх ба биčгийн союлын агуу их дурсгал мөн* [The Secret History of the Mongols as a Great Monument of Mongolian History and Writing], a report read at the general session of the International Conference dedicated to the 750th anniversary of the Secret History, held in Ulaanbaatar in 1990, and appearing later in the *Bulletin of the IAMS*, 1990, No. 2(6), pp. 7-19 (entry 316).