

## *inu* and *anu* in the Secret History of the Mongols

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*inu* and *anu* usually function in the *Secret History of the Mongols* (1240?) as non-reflexive possessive pronouns in the third person (singular and plural). With few exceptions they are placed after their complements. They offer some special features which we will try to describe in the following.

*inu* appears 226 times in the *Secret History of the Mongols*. The subject or object preceding it, which it refers to, is sometimes singular--for example, *gergei inu yo'ai maral aji'ai* "his wife was a fallow doe" (§1, 502) and *örö'ele yuya inu quyulju* "[he] cut off one of its [of the three-year-old deer's] thighs" (§16, 629/630).<sup>1</sup>

There are five cases in which the reference of *inu* is plural, for example, *Alan\_yo'a eke inu ügülebi* "Their mother Alan\_yo'a said . . ." (§20, 715); *angqa yeke inu Ökin\_barqay* "The big one of them [of the seven sons] was Ökin\_barqay" (§48, 1023). See also §§ 90 (2x) and 248. Collective nouns, e.g., *irgen* "people, group of people" or names of tribes in the *Secret History of the Mongols* were sometimes grammatically treated as plural and in other cases as singular. The former could not be classified as exceptions here.

*anu* appears sixty-four times in the *Secret History of the Mongols*. Its reference is normally plural, for example, *eke anu Alan\_yo'a* "Their [the three children's] mother Alan\_yoa" (§18, 708). *Baday Kiš(i)lig qoyar-un tusa-yin anu tula* "because of Baday and Kiš(i)lig's services" (§187, 6409).

There is one instance in which the reference of *anu* is clearly singular: *soltan-i doroy-itda'ulju balayad irge anu abu'ay bida* "we overthrew the Soltan and we conquered his cities and peoples" (§260, 10715). But even in this case there could have been an understanding of a collective in the background (the Soltan and his warriors).

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<sup>1</sup> References to the lines in the *Secret History of the Mongols* are according to Igor de Rachewiltz, *Index to the Secret History of the Mongols* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1972).

It is quite clear that *inu* was originally a possessive pronoun with singular reference and that *anu* was a possessive pronoun with plural reference. This disjunction, however, soon disappeared. In the *Altan Tobči* (XVIIth century), for example, *inu* and *anu* were already being used arbitrarily.<sup>2</sup>

Because of the analogies in the pronominal system (*mi-nu* "my," *či-nu* "your," *ma-nu* "our," *ta-nu* "your") and evidences in other Altaic languages<sup>3</sup> there is no doubt that both pronouns are genitive forms of old personal pronouns of the third person \**i* "he, she, it" and \**a* "they," as Nicholas Poppe<sup>4</sup> and others have pointed out and nobody has contradicted. There is one interesting case in the *Secret History of the Mongols* where *inu* is still used without possessive meaning as genitive of a personal pronoun: *inu metüs-i či'ün-tür üliba* "Those like him we have measured against the linchpin [of a car and exterminated]" (§156, 4831). If *inu* and *anu* are placed after postpositions governing the genitive, as, e.g., *qoyinača* "after" (4 x), *esergü* "against" (3 x), a direct possessive meaning is also not given, but the distinction of the numerus remains.

As regularly postpositioned forms in the Mongolian language follow the rules of vocalic harmony, *inu* and *anu* were sometimes suspected to be just phonetic variants without semantic difference, *inu* following words with front vowels and *anu* following words with back vowels. Statistics show that the author(s) of the text of the *Secret History of the Mongols* handed down to us were indeed influenced by the rules of vocalic harmony when using *inu* and so it is plausible that they should have acted analogously with *anu*.

	Total number of instances	Number after words with front vowels	Number after words with back vowels
<i>inu</i>	226	203	23
<i>anu</i>	64	32	32

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hans-Peter Vietze, Gendeng Luwsan, *Altan Tobči. Eine mongolische Chronik des XVII. Jahrhunderts von Blo bzán bstan 'jin. Text und Index.* (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. G. J. Ramstedt, *Einführung in die altaische Sprachwissenschaft. Formenlehre* (Helsinki, 1952), pp. 69ff.

<sup>4</sup> Nicholas Poppe, *Grammar of Written Mongolian* (Wiesbaden, 1954), pp. 50f.



The ratio of words with front vowels to words with back vowels in the *Secret History of the Mongols* is 3,376: 4,972 (words containing *e*, *ö*, *ü* and words containing *a*, *o*, *u* were counted).

Gerhard Doerfer did not have the impression that the possessive pronouns in the *Secret History of the Mongols* could be influenced by vocalic harmony, but he did not pay special attention to *inu* and *anu*.<sup>5</sup>

*inu* and *anu* offer some syntactical differences in comparison with other possessive pronouns. *inu* as a possessive pronoun is never placed in front of its complement, whereas the other possessive pronouns are, though not in many cases. *minu* "mine," for example, appears in nineteen cases in front of its reference (total appearance of *minu*: 221).<sup>6</sup> *anu* is placed in front of its complement in three cases: *anu uruy* "their family," contextual meaning "one from their family" (§165, 5105), *anu qor* "their quivers" (§190, 6631), and *ene anu yeke üge* "these their big words" (§190, 6630/6631). *inu* has the genitive form in the demonstrative pronouns *ene* and *tere*, *e'ün-ü* and *te'ün-ü*, as its equivalent and these are always placed in front of their complements. They are used both in the *Secret History of the Mongols* and in the modern language, if the possessive relation is to be especially emphasized. Gerhard Doerfer described this matter thoroughly.<sup>7</sup> By contrast with the language periods after composition of the *Secret History of the Mongols*, there are no genitive forms of the demonstrative pronouns plural *ede* and *tede* used as possessive pronouns in the *Secret History of the Mongols*. Thus, *anu* is placed in front of its complements in the three cases mentioned above, in which the possessive relation is emphasized. Igor de Rachewiltz gives the impression he believes it was used for emphasis too, since he underlined "their" in his translation of *anu qor*.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, John Charles Street, in his excellent analysis of the language of the *Secret History of the Mongols* also lists *inu* as an

<sup>5</sup> Gerhard Doerfer, *Zur Syntax der Geheimen Geschichte der Mongolen*, Inaugural Dissertation zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades, Freie Universität Berlin, 1954, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> It might be of interest that *minu* (and also *cinu*) is placed in front of its reference more frequently towards the end of the *Secret History of the Mongols*. Its first appearance in front of its reference is in §145, 4124.

<sup>7</sup> Gerhard Doerfer, pp. 42ff.

<sup>8</sup> Igor de Rachewiltz, "The Secret History of the Mongols, Chapter Seven," *Papers on Far Eastern History*, University of Canberra, Vol. 18 (September 1978), p. 48.

emphatic particle with the meaning "really; on the one hand."<sup>9</sup> He refers to one passage in the *Secret History of the Mongols* which could lead to this understanding: *ükü'esü inu ükü sügei, a'asu inu asuyai* "if [the horse] dies, I will die. If [it] lives, I will live" (§24, 738/739).<sup>10</sup> But isn't this, as in three similar cases in §§ 242 (2x) and 253, also to some extent an example of a possessive relation (in case of *his* death)?

In the language periods after the *Secret History of the Mongols*, *inu* and *amu* were used as subject particles too, for example *naran inu yarba* "The sun rose" (literally "his sun rose"). There is only one comparatively clear instance in *The Secret History of the Mongols* where *inu* no longer has any direct possessive meaning: *Teb inu tende bolγay-daba*, "Teb was there identified" (§246, 9816). In other cases, there is always a possessive meaning in the background, e.g., *noqai jil namur inu* "in the year of the dog, in autumn" [the autumn belongs to the year of the dog] (§153, 4703), etc. Nicholas Poppe explained this double function of *inu* and *amu* as follows:

The primitive Mongol of ancient times was unable to imagine anything not being part of a group. Therefore, even in cases where ownership was out of the question, he tried to place objects into groups, considering them as belonging to their respective groups . . .<sup>11</sup>

In the further process of language development *inu* and *amu* were reduced to only one form, namely *h* in modern Khalkha Mongolian, which is written (in the Cyrillic alphabet) as *hb*, where *b* designates only that *h* is not nasal. It is widely used, and it has kept both functions, possessive pronoun and subject particle. Of course, there is no trace of a singular or plural meaning any longer, and it would be totally wrong to place *hb* in front of its complement.

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<sup>9</sup> John Charles Street, *The Language of the Secret History of the Mongols* (New Haven, CT, 1957), p. 49.

<sup>10</sup> John Charles Street, p. 41.

<sup>11</sup> Nicholas Poppe, p. 139f.