

Altan Tobči, A Brief History of the Mongols, by bLo·bzañ bsTan·jin with A Critical Introduction by The Reverend Antoine Mostaert, C. I. C. M., Arlington, Virginia, and An Editor's Foreword by Francis Woodman Cleaves, Associate Professor of Far Eastern Languages, Harvard University, Harvard-Yenching Institute, Scripta Mongolica I. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952. Pp. xxvi + IV + 161 (Part I) + 193 (Part II).

Altan Tobči is an important work in Mongolian historical literature. Definite data on its author, whose name is pronounced Lubsan Dandzan in Mongolian, and the time when he wrote his work are unknown, but, to judge from the contents of this history, it might have been written sometime between 1649 and 1736.

The publication reviewed here is a photo-offset reproduction of a book published by the Mongolian Scientific Committee in Ulān Bātur in the twenty-seventh year of the Mongolian People's Republic, i. e., 1937 in the European calendar. This new edition contains an editor's foreword by Professor Francis W. CLEAVES and a valuable introduction by the Reverend Antoine MOSTAERT.

This publication is based on a manuscript found in 1926 by the then chairman of the Mongolian Scientific Committee, Ĵamyang Gūng (died in 1930). The manuscript, property of the library of the Scientific Committee, was sent in 1932 to the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in Leningrad and remained there for almost three years during which it was photostated and studied by Tsyben ŽAMTSARANO. A detailed description of the *Altan Tobči* manuscript constitutes the fifth chapter of ŽAMTSARANO's outstanding work *Mongol'skie letopisi XVII veka* (Trudy Instituta Vostokovedeniia XVI, Moskva-Leningrad, 1936). At that time ŽAMTSARANO, KAZAKEVIČ, and I planned a phototypic edition of the manuscript and the publishing house of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR issued quite satisfactory samples of a few pages of the manuscript. However, ŽAMTSARANO and KAZAKEVIČ were arrested in 1937 and never heard of again, and the Academy of Sciences was reluctant to continue the work started by them. Meanwhile the Mongolian

Scientific Committee published the manuscript. Though that edition is not critical and lacks philological apparatus, it is of great value, because it makes the precious manuscript accessible to science. The first edition of *Altan Tobči* was little known outside Mongolia and the USSR and, therefore, the new Harvard edition is very welcome.

Altan Tobči is a brief history from the legendary ancestor of Chingis Khan, Börte Čino, to the downfall of Legden's empire conquered by the Manchus. This history is valuable in itself as another chronicle of the Mongols, containing new details. But its value is increased considerably by the fact that it includes large portions of the *Secret History* presented in verbatim excerpts, which sometimes contribute to better understanding of the text of the *Yüan-ch'ao pi-shih* in Chinese transcription. On the other hand, the passages from the *Secret History* occurring in the text of the *Altan Tobči* are evidence of the fact that there once existed a complete copy of the *Secret History* written in Uighuric script, otherwise the author of the *Altan Tobči* would not have been in a position to quote them.

The great importance of *Altan Tobči* for studies on the *Secret History* was recognized by the Mongolian Scientific Committee. Its members knew that PELLLOT was engaged in research on the *Secret History* and, therefore, a handwritten copy of the manuscript was sent to him. This copy is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. At the same time KOZIN was preparing his edition of the *Secret History*, based on the reconstruction and translation made by Palladius. KOZIN also recognized the great value of the *Altan Tobči* and included in his edition all passages of the *Altan Tobči* which coincide with those of the *Secret History* (*Sokrovennoe skazanie*, Moskva-Leningrad, 1940, pp. 321-397).

A complete description of the *Altan Tobči* and a comparison of its contents with those of other Mongolian chronicles are found in ŽAMTSARANO's book mentioned above. Therefore, it is not necessary to dwell on the contents of *Altan Tobči* in this review and I shall confine myself to a few remarks on the language of the *Altan Tobči*.

Altan Tobči is written in a language characteristic of the works

of the secular literature of the second half of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century. It is not the Classical Mongolian used in Buddhist works but Written Mongolian influenced by the local dialects. On the other hand, it contains numerous archaic elements. The passages taken literally from the *Secret History* are particularly archaic and scarcely differ in language from Preclassical Mongolian. The archaic elements in the language of *Altan Tobči* were hard to understand even for the Mongols of the eighteenth century and the copyists of the manuscript deemed it necessary to explain them to the readers. Therefore, many words and locutions are glossed, e. g., (Part I) p. 8: *qaryutai* = *SH qara'utu* (epitheton of *tergen* "carriage" translated as "black" in the *Secret History* which is doubtful) is glossed in *AT* as *sekür* (cf. Mo. *sekügür* "brim of a hat, screen," Kalmuck *sekür* "anything put on, erected, superstructure") which can be translated here as "shelter," i. e., "a carriage with a shelter, a covered carriage, van"; p. 11: *ecin-e* "in absentia, hidden, secretly" as *dalda* "secretly"; p. 12: *ese dongγodba* "made no sound" as *dayun ese γarba*; p. 14: *embüle ger* "a dwelling made of twigs" as *ebesün görümel ger* "a house twisted of grass"; p. 16: *dayuliqui* "attack, act of attacking" as *dobtulqui id.*; p. 20: *tün* "forest" as *siγui id.*; p. 25: *ayimas* "be angry!" as *kilingle id.*; p. 31: *odur-un* as *yabun* "while going"; p. 31: *caq-a* "son" as *köbegün id.*, in another place as *nilq-a* "infant"; p. 38: *sibege* "fortification, wall" as *küriy-e* "wall, fence"; p. 41: *biderey-e* "let us seek!" (cf. Buriat *beder-* "to seek") as *eriy-e id.*; p. 42: *ösüg* "kumyss, fermented mare's milk" as *ayiray id.*; p. 51: *erüsün* "vanquishing" as *ilayun id.*; p. 64: *γor* "bow" as *numun id.*; p. 67: *čerbi* as *türügüü noyan* "the first (or senior) lord"; p. 71: *qoor* "arrow case" as *qorumsay sayaday id.*; p. 87: *ariiqu* (a rare word occurring in the manuscript written on birch bark, cf. *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie II*, p. 100) as *emiyekü* "to be frightened"; p. 86: *emčü* (instead of *ömčü*) *irgen* "inherited people, people belonging to one's apanage" as *dotoγadu irgen* "inner people"; p. 112: *buly-a* as *dayisun* "enemy." In the second part *čayurayulbai* (derived from *čayura-čaura-čuur* "military expedition") is explained on p. 19 as *čeriglegülbei* "he

sent on a military expedition”; p. 20: *ayan čiyurlaǰu* “departing on a military expedition” (derived from the same stem *čayura* etc. as the preceding word) as *mordaǰu id.*, etc.

It is to be noted that some place names are identified with their modern equivalents, e. g., the name of the river *Tüנגgelig yorugan*, mentioned many times in the *Secret History* is explained on page 8 and *passim* as *Čüנגgür tala*.

Many ancient words and expressions were misunderstood by the copyists, however. Numerous glosses contain erroneous explanations of words as correctly remarked by the Reverend Antoine MOSTAERT (p. xi), e. g., p. 63 *sauya* (cf. *Muqaddimat al-Adab*, p. 319: *sauyat* “a welcome gift”) is explained as *teǰiy-e* “bring up!”; p. 11: *kögsimel qonin* (= *SH köngšilemel qonin* “dried mutton”) as *kögsin qonin* “an old sheep”; p. 48: *sidküil* (cf. *HJAS* 13.316, *šidküil*) “gift” as *emüskel* “garment”; p. 54: *čegere* “chest” as *jeǰer-e* “antelope” and *bögere* “kidney” as *taulai* “hare”; p. 56: *siy-a* “ankle bone” as *ǰiya* (instead of *ǰiqa*) “border, edge,” etc.

Numerous archaic grammatical forms occur in the text of the *Altan Tobči*. In a brief review only a few of them can be mentioned, e. g., various forms of the pronoun of the third person **i* “he”: dat.-loc. *imada* p. 140, instr. *ima ǰari* (obviously misunderstood by the copyist and written separately) p. 126, etc.; plural forms in *-yud*, e. g., *qarayčiyud* “black” p. 130; unusual plural forms as *ǰad* “hands” p. 154 (like *möd* “roads” and other examples in old texts); agreement in number, e. g., *kökeǰsed köked* “the breasts which have been sucked” p. 37; forms of the verb *a-* “to be” which have disappeared in the modern language, e. g., *ayu* “is” p. 96; the rare verbal form in *-d* which is by origin a plural of the *converbum modale* in *-n*, e. g., *uqud ta* “you will understand” p. 140;¹ forms with the suffix *-ǰun / -gün*, e. g.,

¹ KOZIN has transcribed this form correctly as *uǰud ta* (*op. cit.*, p. 375), but the editors of the Ulān Bātur edition have *nuqud da*, whereby the initial consonant of *da* is rendered with a character used only in medial position (Part I, p. 140). As written there, *nuqud da* does not make any sense. Comparison with PELLIOU’s edition of the *Secret History* (end of § 209 on p. 82 of PELLIOU’s edition) shows that this was originally *uqad ǰe* “shall understand.” The particle *ǰe* is replaced by the synonymous

(Part II) p. 37: *degegün* “on,” p. 74: *eč̄inegün* “secretly”; the archaic pronoun *teli* “that” (Part II) p. 79, etc.

The introduction written by the Reverend Antoine MOSTAERT contains valuable data on the manuscript, its historical importance, and language. A synoptic table of passages of the *Altan Tobči* which coincide with those of the *Secret History* facilitates comparative studies of both works.

There is no doubt that *Altan Tobči* will be studied with great interest both by historians and linguists.

To conclude this review, I should remark that this important publication is the first volume of a new series projected by the Harvard-Yenching Institute for the purpose of making unedited Mongolian manuscripts and rare books accessible to science.

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Бурят-монгольско-русский словарь, составил К. М. Черемисов под редакцией Ц. Б. Цыдендамбаева, около 25 000 слов, с приложением краткого грамматического справочника по бурят-монгольскому языку, Государственное издательство иностранных и национальных словарей, Москва – 1951, 852 стр.

[*Buriat-Mongolian-Russian Dictionary*, Compiled by K. M. CHEREMISOV and Edited by Ц. Б. ЦЫДЕНДАМБАЕВ, Approximately 25,000 Words, With an Appended Brief Grammatical Outline of Buriat-Mongolian, State Publishing House of Foreign and National Dictionaries, Moscow – 1951, 852 pages].

While there are several grammars of the Buriat language (officially called Buriat-Mongolian) and numerous descriptions of its dialects, no reliable dictionary of this language existed until

particle *da* in *Altan Tobči*. The latter particle still exists in Khalkha, Buriat, and in other Mongolian languages. On the other hand, *da* may stand for *ta* “you.” The verbal forms in *-d* occur in the text of the *Secret History*, in the *Hua-i i-yü*, and in documents written with the ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭᠤᠰᠤ script.