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THREE OIRAT-MONGOLIAN DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENTS OF 1691

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The 1958 book by Miss Nina P. Shastina, *Russko-mongol'skie posol'skie otnošeniya XVII veka* (Moscow, 182 pages), deals with the diplomatic relations between Russians and Khalkhas, and between Russians and Oirats. As illustrations to the book, there are given a number of diplomatic documents and archival notes, three of which are in Oirat-Mongolian script. Since the text of the book does not translate or indeed particularly comment on these, it may be of interest to give a transcription and translation here and now.[1]

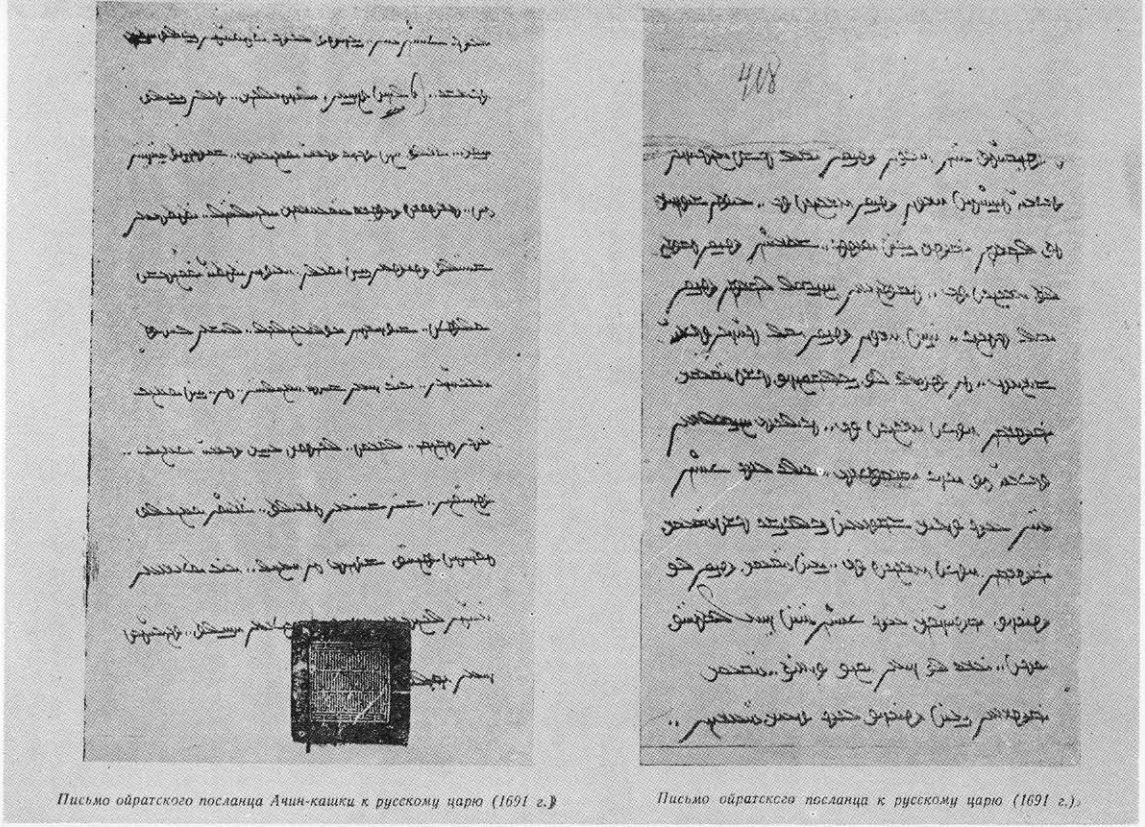
A comparison of the transcribed text and the translation will in general justify the reading, but certainly it is possible in some cases to propose slightly different versions by changed division of phrases, and by construing the situation in another way. One's interpretation of the events does much to color the interpretation of the text.

My particular thanks to both Professor N. Poppe and to Father Henry Serruys, C.I.C.M., for their views on readings, words and phrases, though they are not responsible for my conclusions, and further to Sir Gerard Clauson, for a helpful letter and references.

DOCUMENT ONE

This missive, it is important first to note, is not an official one, because it bears no seal or cachet as do the other two. Yet it must have been turned over to the Russian Czar in 1691 by the Oirat envoy from Galdan Boshogtu, because it has been preserved in the Russian state archives.

[1] After this article was written, there appeared David M. Farquhar's work, "The Official Seals and Ciphers of the Yüan Period", in *Monumenta Serica*, 25 (1966), 362-393, which surveys hP'ags-pa script seals in Chinese. Professor Farquhar shares my discontent with the second line of the Galdan seal — see the end of this article.



Письмо ойратского посланца Ачин-кашки к русскому царю (1691 г.)

Письмо ойратского посланца к русскому царю (1691 г.)

Fig. 1. Left: Letter of the Oirat envoy Achin Kashka to the Russian Czar in 1691 (Document Two); right: Letter of the Oirat envoy to the Russian Czar in 1691 (Document One).

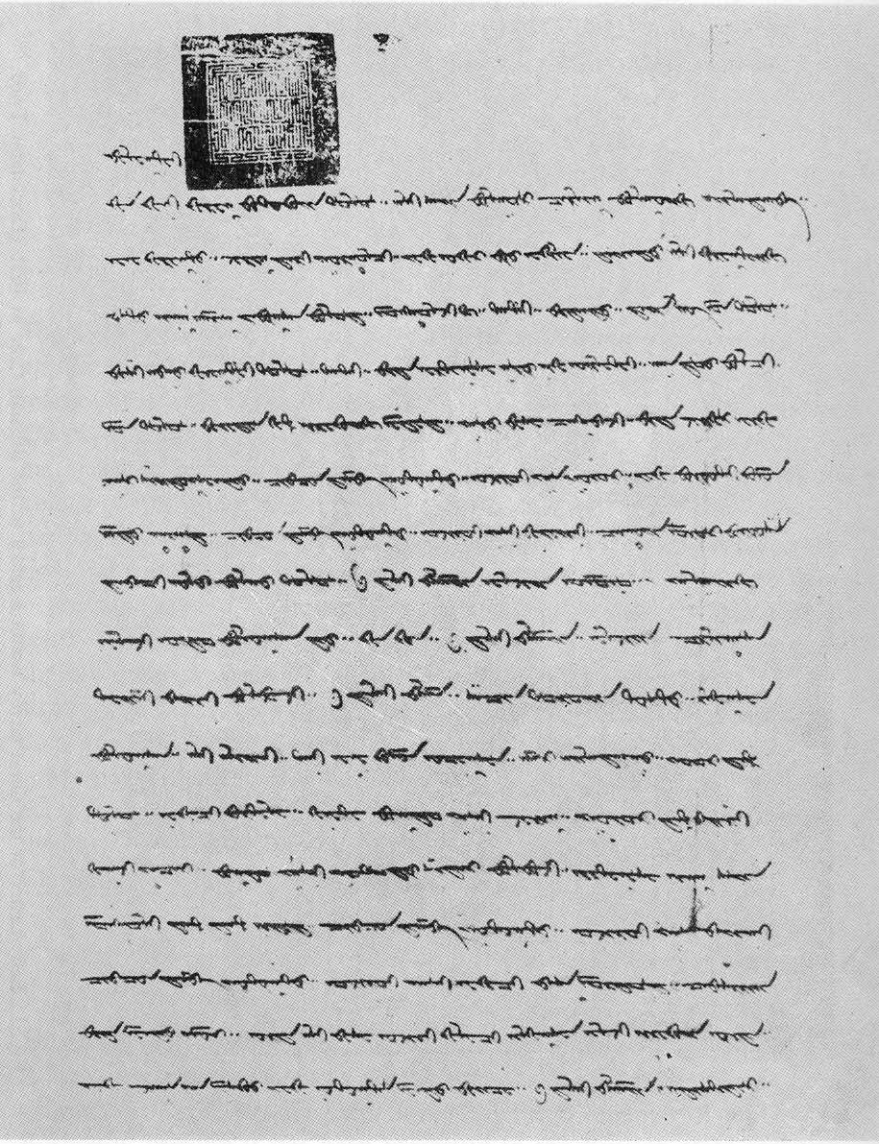


Fig. 2. Letter from the Oirat Khan, Galdan, to the Russian Czar, in 1691 (Document Three).

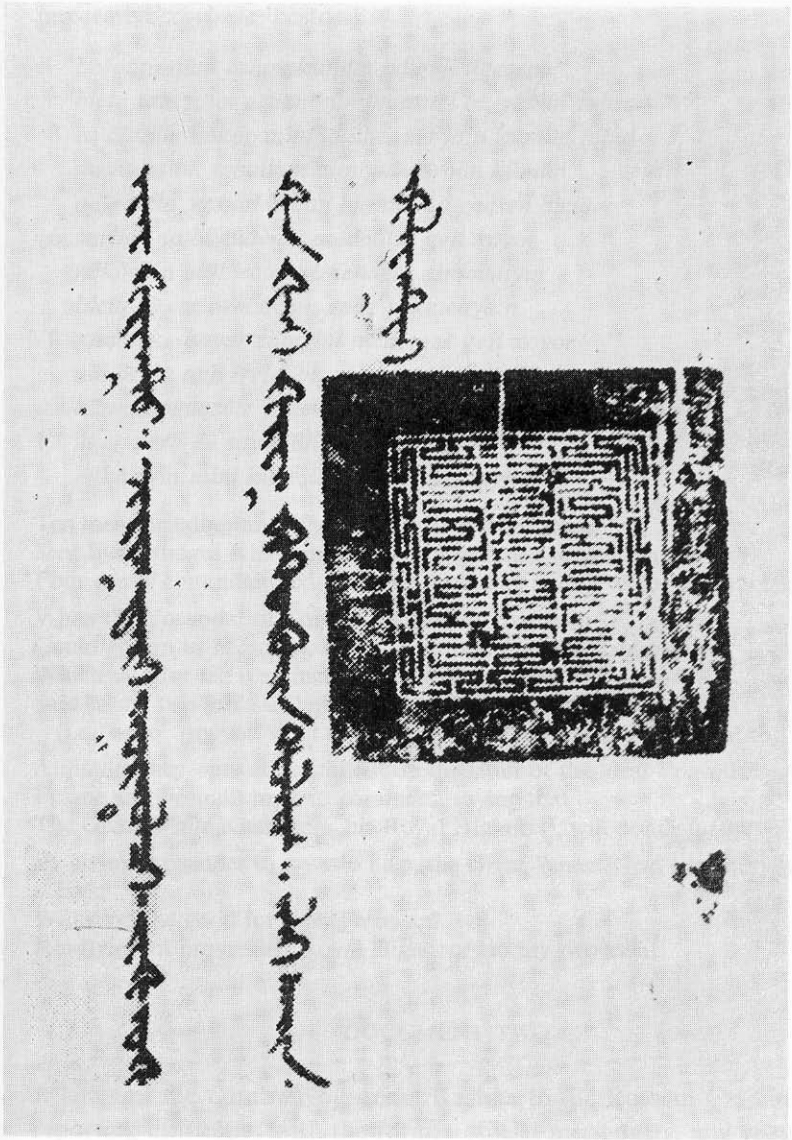


Fig. 3. The Great Seal of Galdan Boshogtu Khan.

This seems to be confirmed from the concluding tone, produced by usage of the *nomen futuri*, viz., *dutaxu* 'will lack' and *bayixu* 'will be', plus the imperative *xayirala* 'bestow!'

bošoqtu qa:n arban kümün od geji ilgeqsen
biciq tamγatai arban kümün irelei bi. yabun zabsar-
tu dörbön nökör mini ükübe. zurγa:n kümün tobul-
du irelei bi. tobuliyin almoud dörbön kümün
od getele, namai arban kümün od geqsen biciq
zarligi. ta bügüde-dü medöülsü geji xoyor
nökörö:n abji irelei bi. tendeki almoudiyin
biciq-tü ese orobocigi, ende yeke caγa:n
xan yeke bayar zöbiyini medemze geji xoyor
nökörö:n abji irelei bi. mini xoyor kümün-dü
künesü oguqsö:r yeke caγa:n xani šang dutaxu
ügei. nere-dü sayin ülü bayixu. xoyor
nököriyin mini künesü yeke bayar xayirala.

Ten men including myself[2] arrived with a letter under seal
Sent by Boshogtu Khan and saying for ten men to go. On the way
Four of my comrades died. Six men including myself[2] came to Tobolsk.

When the Voevoda[3] of Tobolsk said [only] four men
Could go [on to Moscow], I went and took the letter-order
Which said for ten men including me[2] to go, and
Said to my two [unlisted] men, 'You will inform everyone'
[i.e., as to why you went to Moscow when the Voevoda said not to].

Although they were not enrolled[4] on the letter of the local Voevoda[3].
I came and brought my two comrades, saying that
The Great White Khan here, his Royal Highness[5], will decide justly.

By giving provender to my two men, the Great White Khan's treasury will not lack.
Will it not be good for [your] renown?
Kindly grant provender, Royal Highness[5], to my two men!

DOCUMENT TWO

A letter of the Oirat envoy Achin Kashka to the Russian Czar in 1691, reporting difficulties with the former official messengers, and requesting future notice by letter of anything required.

[2] Literally, 'I came ten men', 'I came six men', etc.
[3] *almoud* < Turkic *alpaγud*, cf. *Central Asiatic Journal*, vol. 7, page 24, note 6.
[4] *orobocigi* 'although not entering', colloquial concessive, a typical Oirat form.
[5] Literally, 'Grand Grace' (*yeke bayar*).

yeke caγa:n xan, meskü̈ yeke nutuqta:n mendü̈ amur
beyize. dalai blamayin adistide:r, bide mendü̈
amur. urdu ali bese kereq üyileyigi, zokistu xašaq-
tai, gergü̈üri kiboro xoyoro:r ayiladxa:d, nutugiyin
zaxadu kürküyin mani urda, arban nutuq nü̈ülgeji
odboci, zabsarta:n ebderelde:d, danjin wangbu
ireqsen, ene sayin zanggi ayiladxan, ta, mani üyile
nigen tölö:, doroi de:tür yamar kereq üyile,
bolxula, zaxa zaxayin turadu, nuryun üyiledü
tustai bolxu zak'a:gi ta ayilad. ene uciriyin
niqte delgeren.... ...olcira amandu, beleqtei
sayin ödör.....

CACHET

Great White Khan, (I trust) you in your great homeland, Moscow, are surely healthy and well.
By the blessing of the Dalai Lama, we are healthy and well.

Previously, you advised (us) of whatever deeds and needs
Via the two persons Gregory Kibirev and his trusted Cossack.

[This time, however]
Before arriving at the border of our homeland,
Although made to go ten stages removed[6],
They quarreled amongst themselves.
Danjin Wangbu came and reported this fine news.

As your and our affairs are one, in event of any matter or necessity, high or low, in any border town,[7]
Advise (= send) me a letter which will be useful for the general welfare.[8]
... this circumstance carefully and in detail ... orally.[9]

On a fine and propitious day ... CACHET

DOCUMENT THREE

A letter from the Oirat Khan, Galdan, to the Russian Czar, in 1691, requesting that the Czar send him men and supplies of various sorts, so as to enable Galdan to move against the Mongolian Jebtsun Damba Khutukhtu and Ochiroi Khan who have committed various offenses against him.

[6] *nü̈ülgeji odboci* 'although they were caused to nomadize and go'.
[7] Literally, 'in a town of the border and border'. Such a repetition conveys the idea of 'each', hence, 'in any town of the border'.
[8] *nuryun üyile* 'the general matter', cf. *res publica*?
[9] The leaders (...) indicate words obscured by the cachet.

yeke caya:n xan mesküü yeke nutuqta:n mendü bayize. dalai blamayin, adistide:r
bida mendü amur. urda ali bese uciri keleji ilgeqsen elci ireküyin urda,
zebzün damba xutuqtu, ociroi xa:ni negeji basa mordo:d, zabsariyin
mongγoli dam dam ire:d, zebzün damba xutuqtu, ociroi xa:n bayinai
geqci γazar, boqdo xa:ni nutaqdu šidar bolboci, ertene:se inaq sayin
tölö:, negeji kürtele, genete boqdo xa:ni ceriq, xoyor dam bayiri
boluqsan, ali aliyini, tani ene kümün üzeqsen, ama:r ayiladxaxu, qoyor dam
teyimi bayiri bolboci, dalai blama, šajin töröyin tustu, ilgeqsen
elci odo boluqsan-du, ken ken, dalai blamayin, elicyin jarliya:sa
dabaji ülü bolqu tölö:, dalai blamayin elciyin ömönö, xalxayigi
mandu γarγa:d zebzün damba xutuqtu, ociroi xa:ni beyeyini, xarγuyin mörö:r buruuša:
xa:r šiyidüqsendü, zebzün damba xutuqtu, ociroi xan xoyor, yeke buruutai kümün
mön tölö:, beyeden gem ireküyigi mede:d, xa:ru bese zangxabaci, bida cerige:r erke
biši abqu kereqtei tölö:, tantai, bida ertene:se xa:ru nige üyiletei, axa döü bolji
batu inaq amaraq yabuqsan bolo:d, mongγolci gi, tantai, bidandu dayin lab mön tölö:
ene kereqtü, cereq dari xorγolji, yeke üker buu ekilen, dayindu ali kereqteyigi
ken keni kereq bütüküyin tölö:, ali sayin bolxu:r zarliq bolxugi ayiladxaba.

beleqtei [ödör?] CACHET

Great White Khan, (I trust)
You are indeed well in your great homeland, Moscow.
By the blessing of the Dalai Lama, we are healthy and well.
Prior [to all this] (your) emissary came who had been sent to discuss various former matters.
The Jebtsun Damba Khutukhtu joined[10] Ochiroi Khan and then set out, and
Came via the stages (*zabsar*) of Mongolia successively.
Inasmuch as the land in which they say that the Jebtsun Damba Khutukhtu and
Ochiroi Khan live is close to the homeland of the Bogdo Khan (= the Chinese-Manchu ruler), and because of (their) long-time good relations, they (all) arrived in unison.[11]

[10] *negeji* = *negedji* 'united'.
[11] Literally, arrived united (*negeji* again).

Suddenly the Bogdo Khan's army gave battle twice. That man of yours, [Kibirev][12] saw (everything) whatsoever and he will report orally.

Inasmuch as there had been two such battles, there now appeared an emissary
Sent by the Dalai Lama for the sake of the Faith and the Realm;
Accordingly, no one is permitted to transgress the commands of the Dalai Lama's messenger. (Therefore)
By the offices of (*ömönö*) the Dalai Lama's emissary, protection[13] was produced for us,
And when the persons of the Jebtsun Damba Khutukhtu and Ochiroi Khan
Were condemned and judged by legal procedures, because those two,
The Jebtsun Damba Khutukhtu and Ochiroi Khan are very wicked people,
They know harm will come to their persons and they threaten outrageously.

Because it will be necessary in any event to take up arms, we, being fully
Allied with you from of old, have become brothers, and have acted as
Firm and close friends. Because the Mongols are indeed enemies
To us and to you, I have requested (*ayiladxaba*) that you issue an order
[to send us] To the extent possible for this affair,
In addition to troops, powder and shot, and artillery, whatsoever and whomsoever
May be needed against the enemy.

(written on) a propitious (day). CACHET

The Great Seal of Galdan Boshogtu Khan

The presence of the official seal of Galdan Boshogtu Khan can readily be noted on Documents Two and Three. As is customary, it employs the archaic and ornate seal form of the ḥP'ags-pa script, a modification of standard Tibetan script as developed out of the Sanskrit devanāgari. This script has been given discussion in the book by N. Poppe (ed. J. Krueger), *The Mongolian Monuments in ḥP'ags-pa script* (Wiesbaden, 1957), particularly the charts on pages 16-18 there. It is further known that this variety of ḥP'ags-pa script has been used in recent times on the official seals of the Dalai Lama (e.g., 1909, as illustrated in the frontispiece to Tsepon Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, New Haven, 1967). It has also been noted on the private seals of persons resident in Mongolia.[14]

[12] Probably Kibirev (cf. Document Two), who, according to Zlatkin, *Istoriya Džungarskogo Khanstva* (Moscow, 1964), p. 284, was present at an Oirat-Manchu clash. (My thanks to Father Serruys for the reference.)

[13] *xalxa* 'shield, protection' can also mean 'Khalkha', though not here.

[14] It should, however, be pointed out that the seal character may not be a direct development of the ḥP'ags-pa script, but, as Sir Gerard Clauson and others have put it, a collateral descendant of it. This view is set forth in Sir Gerard's article following up N. Poppe's 1957 book, viz., "The ḥP'ags-pa Alphabet", *Bulletin of the School of*

In line with the earlier known phraseology of such official documents and seals, one would expect the name of the ruler in question, plus a phrase as *biden-ü ǰarliγ* "Our Command", or *manu üge* "Our (Royal) Word". Even to find the much-used *möngke tengri-yin küčün-dür* "by the strength of Eternal Heaven" would not be remarkable.

Consequently, it is not too surprising to find this to be substantially what the seal says, although it did not prove at first too easy to discover even these familiar words. There are three columns on the seal. It should first be noted that very frequently the center column of three is the initial one (often it will have the honorific lift, e.g., cf. the Möngke Khan inscription, N. Poppe, *Central Asiatic Journal*, 6, 14-18). The present inscription is also to be read this way.

The available reproductions of the seal, unfortunately, do not permit it to be read with absolute exactitude. This is because the illustration in Shastina's book is a half-tone photograph. When this was rephotographed and enlarged (4×) for my use, the constituent strokes dissolved into a blur of dots. At a later time, if it becomes possible to view the documents in person or to make other reproductions, a clearer reading may be made. At present, therefore, the seal is tentatively read by me as follows.

dgaḫ-ldan	"Galdan"
bidan ḫγin	"our word" (reading uncertain)
bošogt'u qan	"Boshogtu Khan"

The following comments are necessary. The first character is the *birga*, or introductory swirl used to begin xylograph folios. Next, Galdan is spelled in the Tibetan manner, which does somewhat change the anticipated form of the name. The center line begins with *b*, followed by an extra stroke and an *i*; then *-dan* seems to be identical with the similarly shaped part in line one. The missing genitive indicator *-ü* is noteworthy. An initial *a-chun* letter is next seen (the word *üge* is definitely known to begin with this stop, cf. Poppe-Krueger, vocabulary entry p. 133), followed by the *gamma* or *γ*, letter *i* and *n*. (The final *-n* is merely a common colloquial generalization to *ügen*.) The third column is best written and easiest read, clearly *bošogt'u qan*. It may be mentioned that the seal employs the spelling known to Oirat and Western books, instead of *bušuγtu*, which Father H. Serruys has shown to be the transcription of the name in Chinese sources (*Genealogical Tables, Central Asiatic Studies* 3.59).

Oriental and African Studies, vol. 22, pages 300-323, particularly pp. 304-5, where Sir Gerhard also makes reference to some early articles in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1906-1929).