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On the Origin of Two Mongolic Gender Suffixes*

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In its general meaning, there is no grammatical gender in Mongolic languages. However, in some cases Mongolic languages had and still have the possibility to designate the natural gender of different animals and anthropomorphic beings. Besides the use of attributive constructions¹, it is possible to express such a difference by means of suffixation. The linguistic literature mentions the suffixes *+dAi*, *+tU*, *+Kčī(n)*, *+KAn*, *+lUn*, *+tAni*, *+jin*, and *+tAi*, of which the first two suffixes denote the masculine gender, and the others the feminine one. The use and function of these suffixes were dealt with by POPPE in his *Comparative Studies* (1955), and later several of them were described by him in a paper on the proper names of the Secret History (1975). We can find their description also in the work of GODZIŃSKI (1985) on Middle Mongol.

Being well-known suffixes, they naturally appear in many other works dealing with the Secret History and other sources, only the listing of which would stretch the frames of such a paper.

In this paper, I examine the Mongolic gender suffixes *+dAi* and *+jin* and try to segmentate them.

First, let us see where and in what function they occur.

The use and function of the suffix *+dAi*

Our main source for this suffix is the Secret History of the Mongols. This epic-chronicle includes at least 46 occurrences, not counting repetitions and the different variations of the same forms². Besides, in personal names, it appears in later Mongol chronicles and different Chinese sources, cf. the

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¹ For example, Literary Mongol (LM) *ere takiy-a* 'cock, rooster' ← *ere* 'man, male' and *takiy-a* 'chicken'; *em-e činu-a* 'female wolf' ← *em-e* 'woman, wife; female' and *činu-a* 'wolf'.

² I treat the variations *adarkidai* and *adargidai* as one occurrence.

text of the *Sheng-wu qin-zheng lu* published by PELLIOU and HAMBIS in 1951.

According to POPPE (1975: 162), the data of the Secret History can be divided into two groups:

1. male personal names;
2. nouns which denote the affiliation with a particular clan;

Unfortunately, POPPE does not mention that a majority of the examples from the first group originate from tribe or clan-names, so the two categories are practically one.

In some instances, this can be proved from the source-text itself, in the other cases there exists an indirect evidence. For example, *Adarkidai*, *Ba'aridai*, *Ĵajiradai* and *Ĵewüredei* really are male personal names, but the same forms occur in the expressions *Adargidai*³ *Qongqai* 'Qongqai of the Adargin' (260); *Ba'aridai* *Nayā noyan* 'Naya'a noyan of the Ba'arin' (197); *Ĵajiradai* *Ĵamuqa* 'Ĵamuqa the Ĵajirat' (141), *Ĵewüredei* *Qali'udar* 'Qali'udar of the Ĵe'üret' (183) denoting to which clan or tribe the person belongs.

In some cases, similarly to the above ones, we cannot cite from the text parallel occurrences of personal names and examples denoting affiliation to a certain tribe, but the tribal name origin of the proper names is beyond question. Such examples are: *Barulatai* (personal name) ← *Barula* (clan name); *Ĵürcedei* (personal name) ← **Ĵürčen*, cf. MNT *Ĵürced/Ĵürčet*, the Mongolic plural form of the ethnicon *Ĵürčen*; *Mangqutai* (personal name) ← **manyud*, cf. MNT *Mangqud/Mangqut* (clan name); *Noyagidai* (personal name) ← *Noyakin* (clan name); *Uru'udai* (personal name) ← **uruyud* [cf. MNT *Uru'ut* (clan name)].

In several instances, the text contains the word denoting the affiliation to a certain tribe, and in parallel the tribe-name itself: e. g. *Genigedei Qunan* 'Qunan, from the Geniges clan' (210) ← *Geniges* (clan name); *Merkiidei ele yasutu gü'ün* 'a man belonging to the Merkit clan' (112) ← *Merkit* (clan name); *Onggiradai Dei-sečen* 'Dei-sečen from the Onggirat clan' (61) ← *Onggirat* (clan name); *Qadagidai gü'ün* 'a man belonging to the Qatagin clan' (131) ← *Qatagin* (clan name); *Qongqotadai Čaraqa ebügen-ü kö'ün* 'the son of the old Čaraqa, belonging to the Qongqotan clan' (68) ← *Qongqotan* (clan name); *Uriangqadai ČaQurqan* 'ČaQurqan from the Uriangqai clan' (183) ← *Uriangqai* (clan name).

³ The alternations *k ~ g*, and *d ~ t* in the quoted data are due to the peculiarities of the Uighur-Mongol script and show that the person who transcribed the original text to the Chinese script did not know the exact pronunciation of the given personal names.

Thus, instead of POPPE's semantic grouping, another, but still semantic, grouping would be preferable, all of the above examples then belonging in one group.

POPPE presumes that the main function of the suffix is to form diminutives and caressive expressions. He supports his opinion with examples from Literary Mongol and modern Mongolic languages: LM *oboyadai* 'a special cone-shaped cap worn by lamas' ← *oboya* 'heap, pile, mass etc.'; LM *jangyuudai*⁴ 'young antelope or elk'; LM *amidai* ~ *amindai* 'namasake' ← *amin* 'life'; LM *abayadai* 'dear little uncle' ← *abaya* 'uncle'; Buriat (Bur.) *ulādai* 'the red flower of a lily' ← *ulān* 'red'; Bur. *dūdei* 'dear little brother' ← *dūi* 'younger brother'; Buriat *xūxedei* (*mergen*) 'the name of a shamanistic god' ← *xūxe* 'blue'.

However, it is clear that POPPE's last examples are different from the occurrences in the Secret History, both in meaning and in stem. It is difficult to recognize a diminutive or a caressive in the examples denoting affiliation with a certain clan. Probably two historically different suffixes coincided, rather than there being two different functions of the same suffix. Therefore, the words with a diminutive or caressive meaning were excluded from this examination. It is not impossible, however, that we shall include some examples from the Secret History in this group. Such are the following proper names, whose derivation from an ethnicon runs into difficulties: *Ča'adai*, *Dolo'odai*, *Doqoladai*, *Ĵirqo'adai*, and *Öködei* (*Ögödei*). Two of them, *Dolo'odai* and *Ĵirqo'adai* seem to be derived from numerals. Although numerals are observed frequently as parts of tribe names in the Altaic world⁵, to date we are unaware of Mongol tribe names **doloyan* or **Ĵiryuyan*. However, if the etymology of the ethnicon *naiman* is correct, we cannot exclude the possibility that such Mongol tribes existed.

The etymology of the name *Ögödei* is uncertain, as is the quality of its guttural plosive. Although we do not know of an ethnic name **öğö* or **öge*, the name in the Yuan shi has a feminine form *Ököjin*, too (PELLIOT - HAMBIS 1951: 10), thus an ethnicon cannot be excluded as its origin. Another possibility is that the name might have been derived from the Old-Turkic title *öge* (ED 101a).

⁴ Strange enough, POPPE does not give an etymology to this word. It is a question whether the word belongs here or not. In LM we have *jangun* 'anchor; water chestnut (Tribulus terrestris)', but for semantic reasons this cannot be the stem for the word *janguudai*.

⁵ Cf. the Turkic *Üč Qarluq* 'the three Qarluq (tribes)'; *Toquz Ögüz* 'the nine Ögüz (tribes)'; *On Uyğur* 'the ten Uyğur (tribes)' etc.

The use and function of the suffix +*jin*

This suffix, again, occurs mostly in the Secret History. The number of examples is much smaller than in the case of the suffix +*dAi*, due to the fact that many more males than females feature among the persons featuring in the Secret History. Examples are: *Barqujin qo'a* (personal name) (8); *ya'uġin gū'ün ċi* 'To which clan do you belong?' (38); *Ĵarċi'ut Adangqan Uriangqajin bi* 'I am an Adangqan Uriangqai of the Ĵarċi'ut clan' (38); *Mongqolġin qo'a* (personal name) (3); *Qorijin qatun* (personal name) (130, 132, 136).

It is not impossible that the proper name *Ebügeġin* (166) belongs here, too, although the bearer of this name is possibly a male, since the name is mentioned in connection with a conspiracy. In fact, the suffix +*jin* appears in some expressions which are in connection with the land. Such expressions are: *Barquġin oron* 'Barquġin territory'; *Barquġin tögüm* 'Barquġin Lowland'; *Mongqolġin ulus* 'Mongol people (or country)'. It is even more interesting that in the belief system of the Mongols, the Earth is always personified as a feminine being, cf. *Etiġen-eke* 'Mother-Earth'.

The function of the words formed with the suffix +*jin* is to denote the affiliation of a female to a certain tribe or clan. Added to numeral stems, it can denote the age of different animals⁶, e. g. LM *ġunaġin*⁷ 'three-year-old cow; three-year-old (of female animals)' ← **ġu* 'three'; LM *döneġin*⁸ 'four-year-old female animal (cow, camel, elephant); four-year-old girl' ← **dö* 'four', but these are petrified derivations.

The segmentation of the suffixes

Following this survey of the function and use of these two suffixes, let us consider what can be said about their segmentation.

Until recent times, these suffixes were not treated as compound ones. The turning point in the assessment of one of the two suffixes took place in the year 2003, when KARA mentioned in a note to his paper on the Mongolian texts from Khara Khoto⁹ that it is very likely that the suffix

⁶ I cannot rule out the possibility that there were several homonymous suffixes +*jin*, and the one added to numerals has nothing to do with the suffix +*jin* under examination.

⁷ Cf. LM *ġunan* 'a three-year-old animal (chiefly of bull, ox, or tiger); three-year-old'.

⁸ Cf. LM *dönen* 'four-year-old male animal (bull, camel, or elephant); four-year-old male child'.

⁹ „Mangġudai is the normal masculin epithet of the clan name Mangġud (cf. Asudai,

+*dAi* is built up from a plural marker (+*d*) and a genitive case suffix (+*Ai*).

This genitive case suffix remains productive today in Buriat and Kalmük, and is present in some petrified derivations in Khalkha, e. g. *manai* 'our' ← °*ba(n)* 'we'. It is difficult to explain otherwise the Khalkha genitive +*i* added to words with a so called -*n* stem as well.

POPPE mentions this genitive case suffix in his Comparative Studies (1955: 190) in connection with the Eastern-Buriat. He states that the suffix -**i* is added after a final -*n* in Buriat as a genitive, (the suffix which corresponds to LM +*n*) followed by the "adjectival ending" +**γai* thus, the Buriat form of the genitive would go back to a form +**iγAi*. Accordingly, he compares the Buriat form *ubantai* 'of the water' with the Literary Mongol *usunuu*, giving the form **usunuyai* as a reconstructed form. Further, he recognizes this suffix +**iγAi* in the words *manuqai* 'ours' and *tanuqai* 'yours', which he reconstructs as **manuyai* and **tanuyai*.

In my view, the words *manuqai* and *tanuqai* can be explained in another way: the adverbial suffix +*ki* (GWM 184) is added to the genitive forms *manu* and *tanu* of the first and second person plural personal pronouns, and once again a genitive case suffix in +*Ai*. Hence the meanings of *manuqai* and *tanuqai* are not 'ours' and 'yours', but 'of the ours' and 'of the yours'. Such an explanation of the segment *qai* in these two words is strongly suggested by reference to modern Mongolic languages. For example, the living Khalkha counterparts of these words are *manaix* (LM *manaiki*) and *tanaix* (LM *tanaiki*). Both the Khalkha and Literary Mongol form can be explained only as the oblique stems of the personal pronouns to which the genitive case suffix (+*Ai*) and the suffix +*ki* (Khalkha +*x*) have been added.

POPPE's explanation should also be excluded on the grounds of phonology, because there is not a change /*g*/ > /*k*/ which takes effect in only certain cases. POPPE further remarks that the suffix +*ai* later became general in Buriat and was then also added to words ending in a long vowel, in which case the sound [g] of the suffix +**iGAi* reappears.

However, the [g] which appears before long vowels has nothing to do with the older form of the genitive case suffix, but it is a simple connective sound which appears before many case suffixes if the stem ends in a long vowel.

Borjigidai, Majartai, Qorilartai, Uriangqadai, etc. with -*dai/-tai*, plural -*d* with genitive -*ai*, not to be confused with the originally feminine, later neutral attributive suffix -*tai*, which also became a syntactic marker of sociative, fully or partly replacing the old comitative -*luyw/-lüge*, cognate of the Turkic attributive suffix -*lɣw/-lig*)" (KARA 2003: 7).

The question arises as to whether KARA's view about the segmentation of the suffix is correct or not and how this can be proved.

It appears that KARA's view should be accepted if we analyse the suffix +*jin*, the feminine counterpart of the suffix +*dAi*, in the same manner, and recognize a system of the use of the suffixes.

Although not all of the junctures *ji* originate from a former **di*, it is easy to see that the suffix +*jin* is traceable to a form +**din*, which is a compound of the above-mentioned plural suffix +*d*, and an older genitive form +**In*, which, according to POPPE (1955: 188), appears in the Pre-Mongol (by another term Proto-Mongol) period.

These statements are supported by the text of the Secret History itself. Similar suffix combinations occur several times, e. g.:

+*d* (Plural) +*Un* (genitive)

qoyar darqad-un noyan 'the chief of the two Darqad' (51);

Kitad-un Altan qaban 'Altan khagan of the Kitad' (53);

Tayyiči'ud-un Tarqutai kiriltuq 'Tarqutai kiriltuq of the Tayyiči'ud' (72);

Tarqud-un Qada'an Daldurqan 'Qada'an and Daldurqan of the Tarqud' (120);

Olqunud-un Kinggiyadai 'Kinggiyadai of the Olqunud' (120);

Uru'ud-un Jürčedei 'Jürčedei of the Uru'ut' (130); cf. *Uru'ud-un Jürčedei ebin* (171);

Mangqud-un Quyuldar 'Quyuldar of the Mangqud' (130); cf. *Mangqud-un Quyuldar seçen* (171)

Salji'ud-un Čirgidai ba'atur 'Čirgidai ba'atur of the Salji'ud' (141);

Onggirad-un Dergek emel 'Dergek emel of the Onggirad' (141);

Oyirad-un Quduqa beki 'Quduqa beki of Oyirad' (141);

Qarlu'ud-un Arslan qan 'Arslan khan of the Qarlu'ud' (235);

Uiγud-un Idu'ut 'Idu'ut of the Uiγud' (238);

Merkid-ün Yeke čiledü 'Yeke čiledü of the Merkid' (54);

Kereyid-ün To'oril qan 'To'oril khan of the Kereyid' (105);

Naiman-u Güčügüd-ün Buyiruč qan 'Buyiruč khan of the Güčügüd clan of the Naiman' (158);

Önggüd-ün Alaquš digit quri 'Alaquš digit quri of the Önggüd' (182);

Jürčed-ün Vuqanu 'Vuqanu of the Jürčed' (253);

+*s* (Plural) +*Un* (genitive)

Suldus-un Sorqan-šira 'Sorqan-šira of the Suldus' (82);

Qorolas-un Čonaq Čaqa'an 'Čoyoq Čaqa'an of the Qorolas' (141); cf.

Qorolas-un Qoridai (141);

Ikires-ün Butu 'Butu of the Ikires' (120); cf. *Ikires-ün Tüge-maqa* (141).

Support for this idea would be even stronger if some examples of the Secret History with their equivalents from the Altan tobči are considered:

- MNT *Qongqotadai Čaraqa ebügen-ü kö'ün* (68);
 AT *Qongqotan-u Čaraqa ebügen-köbegün* (LIGETI 1974: 34);
- MNT *Qongqotadai Čaraqa ebügen otču* (72);
 AT *Qongqotan-i Čaraqa-a ebügen odču* (LIGETI 1974: 37);
- MNT *Jarči'ut Adangqan Uriangqajın bi* (38);
 AT *Adangqan Jarčiyud Uriyangqaday-yin kümün bui* (LIGETI 1974: 22);
- MNT *Čekčer Čiquryu qoyar-un ja'ura Onggiradai Dei-sečen-ni jolqaba* (61);
 AT *Čegčer Čiquryu qoyar-un jayura Qonggirad-un Deyi-sečen jolyaba* (LIGETI 1974: 31);
- MNT *Suldus-un Sorqan-šira* (82);
 AT *Süldütey-yin Torqan-sira* (LIGETI 1974: 46);
- MNT *Belgütei noyan Merkidei ele yasutu gü'ün-ni eke-yi minü abčira ke'ejü* (112);
 AT *Belgetei noyan Merkid-tey-yin kümün-i üjebesü eke-yi minu abču ir-e kemejü* (LIGETI 1974: 72);
- MNT *Olqunu'ud-un Kinggiyadai* (120);
 AT *Olqunud-tai Kinggi-tai* (LIGETI 1974: 78);
- MNT *Qongqotadai Mönglik ečige* (130);
 AT *Qongqotan-u Menglig-ečige* (LIGETI 1974: 89).

It is easily recognized that the suffix *+dAi* is interchangeable with the compound of a plural suffix and a genitive one, or simply with a genitive one.

The question now is whether the Mongolic contained a masculine genitive suffix (*+Ai*) and a feminine one (*+In*). Such a differentiation does not seem to be plausible.

As petrified derivation the suffix is observed in later texts, too, e. g. *Mongyoljin kele* 'the Mongol language'. This expression appears most frequently in the forewords and colophones of different literary works. For example the colophone of the Treasury of Aphoristic Jewels yields the following:

<i>“Eneđkeg-ün kebeber [...] India + GEN. language + INSTR. ‘in the language of India’</i>	<i>Töbed-ün kebebe[r] [...] Tibet + GEN. language + INSTR. ‘in the language of Tibet’</i>	<i>Mongyoljin kebeber [...] Mongol + NN language + INSTR. ‘in the Mongol language’</i>
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The parallelism of the text suggests that the suffix +*jin* includes a genitive meaning.

As concerns the suffixes +*dAi* and +*jin*, it is likely that these originally involved a compound of a plural suffix and a genitive case suffix which later became independent suffixes, with some special meanings (‘gender-type affiliation with a certain clan’ → ‘personal names’), and subsequently the gender-type and the genitive were lost, as indicated by the quotation from the Altan tobči: *Adangqan Jarčiyud Uriyangqaday-yin kümün bui* (LIGETI 1974: 22), which was the equivalent of the Secret History’s *Jarči’ut Adangqan Uriangqajin bi* (38).

The modification in the meaning and function of the suffixes took place at around the time when the Secret History was written.

The cause of this erroneous segmentation in the grammars of Mongolic was that the genitive case suffix +*Ai* is almost unknown in the written language. Its equivalents in the written language were +*U* and +*Un*. These suffixes, well known to Mongolists, explains why we cannot find a suffix +**dUn* or +**sUn* with a meaning more or less similar to that of +*dAi* and +*jin*.

Summary

It is very rare that the etymology or segmentation of a certain suffix can be determined, but it is not without precedent. The frequently cited such example from Mongolic is the Khalkha directive case suffix +*rÜ*¹⁰, which goes back to the word *uruγu*¹¹ ‘downward; downstream; toward’ in Literary Mongol, while in some Middle Mongol sources it still preserves the initial *b-*, e. g. MNT *buru’u* ‘mit dem Strom, stromabwärts’.

In this paper, two denominal noun suffixes were examined which were productive in the Middle Mongol period. I have attempted to show that they are compound ones built up from a plural suffix and a genitive case

¹⁰ If the noun ends in *-r*, the form of the suffix is +*rÜ*.

¹¹ ← **uru*; cf. LM *uruysi* ‘forward, onward, ahead, in the future; southward’; *urus-* ‘to flow, run, stream; to float, drift, to dissolve’.

suffix. Their special meaning is traceable in the text of the Secret History. Although the suffixes appear in later texts, they have lost their meaning.

Some homophonic, but historically different suffixes had been differentiated. Such investigations on other Mongolic suffixes will help clarify why we often find several meanings of a certain suffix. Earlier researchers supposed several functions of one suffix, whereas I consider that future researches into the historical morphology of the Mongolic languages should concentrate on elucidating the exact form, function, distribution and meaning of the suffixes, because only thereafter can the question be raised of whether the homophonic suffixes may be unified into one suffix.

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