REMARKS ON THE VOCALISM OF THE SECOND SYLLABLE IN MONGOLIAN

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After the appearance of RAMSTEDT’s “Comparative Phonology of the Written Mongolian and the Khalkha Dialect”¹ and the fundamental Comparative Grammar by VLADIMIRTSOV,² the task of the Mongolists became that of the detailed study of particular phenomena of the phonology of the Mongolian languages. One of the problems which is far from solved is the history of the vowels of the non-initial syllables. It is known that the vowels of the non-initial syllables lost their specific articulation and became assimilated by the vowel of the first syllable.³ This process commenced long ago and even in the most ancient monuments of the Mongolian languages the vowels of the non-initial syllables are already assimilated in many words by the vowel of the stressed (i.e., first) syllable. Even in Written Mongolian the vowels of the non-initial syllables lost their original articulation in many words and were assimilated by the vowel of the stressed syllable.⁴ It is sufficient to point out such words as mongyol “Mongol” and onon “Onon River” in which the original *a of the second syllable became o under the influence of the first syllable: e.g., the form moal in Rubruck’s work⁵ and mongal in Plano Carpini’s description of his travel, both of which represent the older form *mongyal. To this we may add the name Onan-

² Б. Я. Владимирцов, Сравнительная грамматика монгольского письменного языка и халхаского наречия. Введение и фонетика (Ленинград, 1929).
³ Владимирцов, op. cit., p. 311 ff.
⁴ Владимирцов, op. cit., p. 314.
kerule (= Onon and Kerulen). These facts are well known and we shall not dwell on them.

Under such conditions, it is often difficult to decide what the original vowel in the second or third syllable was; in some cases it could have been *a (e.g., *mongyal) and in others *u (e.g., modun “tree”). This problem is of great importance not only from the purely theoretical but also from the practical point of view, because correct transcription of Written Mongolian depends to a great extent upon the solution of this question.

As both Ramstedt and Vladimirov correctly remarked, there was no primary *o or *ö in the non-initial syllables in Written Mongolian and the only primary rounded vowels were *u and *ü. Therefore, the form orun “place” is, according to Vladimirov, the only possible one; the form oron did not exist.

This solution of the question, however, is too simple and the case of Mo. orun, in particular, is different.

First of all, we must mention that in the language of the Secret History the corresponding form is oro (n) “seat, throne” and also “bed” but there is also a parallel form, orun “representative, representation.” In the language of the ḡPags-pa script the only corresponding form is orana “in the place.” In colloquial Western Mongolian of the fourteenth century, represented in the Arabic-Persian-Chagatai-Mongolian dictionary Muqaddimát al-Adab, the word oron “place” occurs only once in this form (cf. sorbistunu oron “the region of the eyelashes”), but many times in the form oran (cf. also oranás, orandán, orantu). In the Monguor language this is urôn, “place,” in Ordos oron...
"place, country, dwelling." The data of the other Mongolian languages are of less value, because the vowel of the second syllable is reduced in them to such a degree that it does not tell anything: Khalkha orγ, Buriat orόγ, Kalmuk orн id. Also unimportant are the data of the related non-Mongolian languages; cf. Ma. orн "place, region," which is probably a Mongolian loan-word. The Turkic forms orun and orıń, "place" mentioned by Vladimirtsov are not significant.

We have seen that Mo. orun (we transcribe it so with reservations) corresponds to oran of the dictionary Muqaddimat al-Adab. Now the following question arises: which is older—orun or oran? Is not the vowel a in oran a later development?

In all cases involving this problem we find that the vowel a is older. Consequently, the form oran is older and Mo. orun should be transcribed oron with o < *a of the second syllable under the influence of the first o. We can corroborate this statement with the data of certain dialects. To prove this we must start with the history of the vowel *o of the first syllable.

I. The Vowel *o of the First Syllable

The vowel *o became o in all Mongolian languages: Mo. bol-, SH bol-, P bol-, Dag. bol-, Mog. bol-, Ord., Kh. bol-, Bur. bol-, Kalm. bol- "to become"; Mo. ol-, SH ol-, P ol-, Ord., Kh., Bur., Kalm. ol- "to find, to acquire." In the Dagur language the initial o in monosyllabic stems has become woa: wgai- "to find." In the Monguor language the vowel o is long in this word; cf. 6li- "to find, to acquire, to


Ивань Захаровь, Полный маньчжурско-русский словарь (Санктпетербург, 1875), p. 132.


Н. Н. Поппе, Дагурсское наречие (Ленинград, 1930), p. 111.
obtain,” but it is also long in ṅoli- “to lick,” ṃi工伤o- “to meet,” ṭōiζ “fat, grease,” and in many other words. On the other hand, *o > Mong. u in many words. As the data of the Monguor language do not contribute anything to the solution of this question, we shall not dwell upon them.

In bisyllabic and polysyllabic stems, the uniformity is broken and *o develops in various languages in a different manner. The most important from this point of view is the Ordos language. There *o is usually represented by o, but in many words also by y. In the Dagur language *o has become o, but in many cases it has resulted in qa. About *o > Ord. u, the Reverend Antoine Mostaert tells us the following: “plusieurs mots qui dans d’autres dialectes montrent dans la première syllabe la voyelle o ont ici la voyelle y” and gives the examples ṁUDY “tree,” ṛyDU “the tent of a prince,” and ṁUṣU “oil.” In the Dagur language the rule is that qa appears in the place of *o only before the vowel *a of the following syllable, but before *u it becomes o. This is important, because it shows that the vowel *o of the first syllable manifests itself in different manners before different vowels. In other words, the different developments of *o permit us to define the primary phonetic value of the vowel of the second syllable: the vowel o indicates that the vowel of the second syllable is *u, and qa indicates that the vowel of the second syllable is *a.

1. *o before *u

Ord. ṁUDY “tree,” Dag. mōd id. = Mo. modun, SH mUDY ~ modun, Kh. moddo, Bur. modη, Kalm. modη id.

23 Antoine Mostaert, “Le dialecte des Mongols Urdus (Sud),” Anthropos 21 (1926), 865.
24 Н. Н. Поппе, Дагурское наричие, pp. 110-111.
25 Mostaert, op. cit., p. 865.
26 N. Poppe, “Über die Sprache der Daguren,” AM 10 (1934) 199.
27 The forms of the language of the Secret History are given after Erich Haenisch, Wörterbuch zu Manghol un Niuca Tobca’an (Leipzig, 1939).
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Ord. үүү “star,” Dag. өд ~ өөдө id. = Mo. odun, Mu.28 ṣadun, SH ṣødun, Mong.29 ṣūd, Kh. ṣødöö, Bur. ṣødöŋ, Kalm. ṣʊŋ id.

Ord. үүү “tent of a prince” = Mo. ordu, SH ordo < *ordu, Kh. ṣordö, Kalm. ṣʊŋ id.

Ord. үүү “a hemp rope” = Mo. үоло, Kh. үöлө, Kalm. үөлө id. = Ma. өлө “hemp.”


Ord. үүүтө “to run, to ride quickly” = Mo. үөрҮү-, SH үөрүл-, Kh. үөрүл-, Kalm. үөрүл- id.

Ord. үүү “oil” = Mo. үөсөн, Kh. үөсөн, Bur. үөгөң, Kalm. үөсөң id.

Ord. үүү “to flee” = Mo. үөрү-, Kh. үөр-, Kalm. үөр- id.

Ord. үүүү “être enlevé par cassement” = Mo. үөлөрү-, Kh. үөлөрү-, Kalm. үөлөрү “to separate, to fall off.”

Ord. үүүү “être à l’affût de profits” = Mo. үөөүүүү, Kalm. үөөүүүү “to be greedy.”


Ord. үүүү “to choose,” Dag. үөө- id. = Mo. үөө-, Kh. үөө-, Kalm. үөө- id.

A few words with ü in the first syllable occur in the Ordos language also with o, e.g., ṣoso “grease, fat, oil, butter,” ṣorgo- “éprouver un mouvement subit de frayeur, s’effrayer,” and so on. The remark by the Reverend Antoine MOSTAERT concerning ṣoso “nord-est du pays des Ordos” is an important indication

28 Muqaddimat al-Adab.
29 Mong. = Monguor language after A. de SMEDT et A. MOSTAERT, op. cit.
30 Alar dialect of the Buriat language.
31 Tungus language after M. Alexander CASTRÉN’s Grundzüge einer Tungusischen Sprachlehre nebst kurzem Wörterverzeichniss (St. Petersburg, 1856).
that such forms with o are characteristic for certain dialects of the Ordos language. Thus the Ordos dialects can be classified from the point of view of the history of the vowel *o before *u into u- and o- dialects. The former are of great importance for the solution of our problem.

2. *o before *o < *a

Ord. χolo “far,” Dag. χoḷ id. = Mo. qola, SH hola, Mu. qola, Kh. χoḷ, Bur. χoḷ, Kalm. χoḷ id.


Ord. χormõ “the lower part of a dress,” Dag. χoɾəm id. = Mo. qormai, Mu. qormai, Kh. χormâ, Kalm. χormâ id.

Ord. χogot “espèce de poireau,” Dag. χoŋgãs “wild onion” = Mo. yoŋosun < *yoŋasun, Bur. yoŋõt, Kalm. yoŋõn id.

Ord. νo’t’oro “within, in,” Dag. νoŋt’ar id. = Mo. dotora < *dotara, SH dotora, P dot’ora, Mu. dotara, Kh. νo’t’or, Bur. dosõ, Kalm. dot’id.


Ord. ogo’t’ono “kind of rat,” Dag. o’t’ɔrɔná “field mouse” = Mo. oyotuna < *oyatuna, Kh. oyot’no, Kalm. oyot’n id. = Ma. oyotono “lepus dauricus.”

Ord. oros “Russian,” Dag. orɔs id. = Mo. oros < *oros, Kh. orɔs, Bur. orõt < *oros, Kalm. orɔs id. Mo. oros < *ros = Pocc, Poccia (and not Русь); SH has orusut “Russian” < Русь.

** The Aga dialect of the Buriat language.
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Ord. inue- "to saddle" = Mo. tooqo- < *toqa-, Kh. t'oɔɔɔ-, Bur. 

Ord.  הצטרפו "mockery," Dag. domɔŋ "joke" = Mo. domɔŋ < 

Ord. وضوع "legends," Bur. domɔŋ "a sad song," Kalm. domɔŋ "legend, tale" = Turkic Baraba jomaq < *domaq "tale."

Ord. bodo- "to think," Dag. bodɔ- < Kh. = Mo. bodo- < *boda-, 


Ord. dowoŋ "a small hill" = Mo. dobo- < *doja, Kh. dowo, Bur. 

We see that the rounded vowel of the second syllable in Written Mongolian is really u < *u only in stems in which *o of the first syllable developed into ɔ in the Ordos language. The rounded vowel of the second syllable is a secondary o < *a in stems in which the Ordos language has the vowel o < *o in the first syllable and in which the Dagur language has the diphthong ɔa (at the beginning of words ɔa < *o). We may also add that sometimes the Dagur language has the vowel o instead of ɔa in the first syllable, but in such cases it has a reduced ɔ in the second syllable. In this connection we may point out that in certain Mongolian languages the vowels easily change their place in words. For example, Kh. əndul < ândil "similar," ɐlɔŋ - ɐlɔŋ "gate," and so on. It seems to be sufficient that the vowel concerned be somewhere in the word in question. Thus the Dagur form domɔŋ "joke" is as regular a development as wɔoŋ < *o.

It can be added that the secondary o < *a is always represented in the dictionary Muqaddimah al-Adab by a, even in words which have a rounded vowel in the second syllable in Written Mongolian: cf. bora "grey," boyani "fine" (Mo. boyoni "short"), botayan "a young camel," dotara "within, in," hojmasun "stockings," hoqar "short," horai "top," monɛaq "ornament," oʃaba
“he kissed,” ojayai “penis,” olan “many,” onqaça “boat,” oran “place,” oraqsan qura “the rain which fell,” oraba “he entered,” qorayai “worm,” soqar “blind,” and so on.\(^33\)

The vowel \(*a\) of the second syllable was assimilated by the vowel \(*o\) of the first syllable at a very early period. In the language of the hP'ags-pa script there are such forms as bodo “substance,” oro- “to enter,” qot'ola “all.” It is interesting that in all such cases the vowel is rendered by o and not by u while \(*u\) of the second syllable is consistently rendered by u: e. g., bolburi “recompensation,” modun “tree,” yosu, and never bolburi, modon, or yoso.\(^34\)

In the language of the Secret History the primary \(*u\) is usually u in such cases, but the primary \(*a\) after a syllable containing the vowel o is often o, as, e. g., bodo “cattle,” bohdo “holy,” boro “grey,” botohan “a young camel,” dorona \(<\> *dorana “east,” dotora \(<\> *dotara “within, in,” hocor- “to remain behind,” jobo- “to suffer,” olan “numerous,” oro- “to enter,” sohor in the name Duwa sohor (*soqar “blind”), sonos- \(<\> *sonas- “to hear,” and so on.\(^35\)

A few words seem to contradict the rule in the Ordos language, e. g., uqturqin “les espaces célestes, ciel, firmament”: though the second syllable contains the vowel \(*a\) (cf. Mo. oytaryui) the vowel \(*o\) of the first syllable has become u.\(^36\) This development is due to the influence of the diphthong \(*ui\). It is known that the diphthong \(*ui\) and also the long vowel \(\tilde{u}\) assimilate the vowels of the first syllable, e. g., Ord. \(\tilde{g}i\tilde{u}\ “bec, museau; partie saillante d’un contrefort d’une chaîne de montagnes, éperon; pointe en forme de bec, soc de charrue; subdivision; bannière mongole, sorte, espèce” = Mo. qosiyun, Kh. xośū “id.

The practical result of the above is that in words with the vowel
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In the first syllable, the rounded vowel of the second syllable should be transcribed in Written Mongolian as u only when the vowel *o of the first syllable becomes \( \xi \) in the Ordos language; it should be transcribed as o (secondary) < *a only when the vowel *o of the first syllable remains o in the Ordos language.

II. The Vowel *u of the First Syllable

The vowel *u of the first syllable often assimilates the vowel *a of the second syllable. This occurs even in Written Mongolian. In such cases the original quality of the vowel of the second syllable cannot easily be determined. As an example we may take Mo. quluyana "mouse," which is etymologically connected with qula "brown" (with the suffix -yana as in altayana, name of a plant, or qarayana, also a plant, derived from altan "gold" and qara "black" respectively), and consequently is a development of an older form *qulayana. It is interesting that this word has the same form, quluqana, also in the language of the hP'ags-pa script and huluqana in the Secret History. Thus it is not easy to decide in what cases Mo. u derives from *u, and in what cases from *a. There is, however, a solution.

In the Tsongol dialect of the Buriat language (spoken in the valley of the Selenga River, in the communities of Tamcha, Noikhon, and so on, not far from Staryi Selenginsk) the vowel u of most of the other Mongolian languages and dialects is, in many words, represented by o, while in other words the correspondence is Tsongol \( \xi = u \). Thus there is a double correspondence: Ts. o = u and Ts. \( \xi = u \). It is not difficult to discover that Ts. o < *u (in the first syllable) occurs only before a syllable with *u, while the original vowel *u of the first syllable remains unchanged before *a. On the basis of this observation it is possible to decide in what cases Mo. u of the second syllable is a primary *u and in what cases it is a secondary u < *a under the influence of the vowel u of the first syllable.37

It is also to be noticed that in the Dagur language the vowel

37 Unfortunately there is no dictionary of the Tsongol dialect. All the following examples were taken from H. H. Popp, Язык и колхозная поэзия Бурят-Монголов селенгинского аймака (Ленинград, 1934).
*u of the first syllable has become o before *u of the second syllable but has developed into qa before *a of the second syllable, e.g., χωδήρ < qudur "well," but χωδά < *quda "men whose children married each other" = Mo. quda "ceux, qui contractant des mariages, allient leur famille à celle d’un autre" (KOWALEWSKI), Ord. χωδά "les chefs de deux familles alliées par le mariage de leur enfants" (MOSTAERT).

1. *u before *u

The vowel *u of the first syllable before *u of the second syllable becomes o in the Tsongol dialect.

Ts. ноог "stag" = Mo. бую, SH буху, Ord. бую, Kh. буюро, Bur. Alar бөөг, Kalm. буу id.


Ts. оңө "to ride horseback," Dag. оңө id., cf. Ts. оңөт conv. perfecti = Mo. unu-, Ord. уун-, Kh. un-, Kalm. un- id. (On the other hand, Ts. унә- "to fall down" = Mo. un- id.).


Ts. боlтö "all," cf. boлtөр "completely," Dag. боlтö "completely" = Mo. бульту, Ord. бульту id., Kalm. бульт "all together."


Ts. χолөсө "reeds" = Mo. qulusun, Ord. χуус, Kh. χулсыс, Bur. Alar χулсөң, Kalm. χулсың id.

Ts. ногоосө "duck," Dag. ногоөс id. = Mo. нукусун, Ord. нукусу, Kh. нугос, Kalm. нуусөң id.

Ts. олөт < *ulus "people," Dag. олөр < *ulus id. = Mo. ulus, Ord. ullus, Kh. ullus, Bur. Alar улат, Kalm. улус "people."

Ts. орсө "flowed, streamed" (past tense), Dag. орсө- "to flow" = Mo. урус-, Ord. урус-, Kh. урос-, Bur. Alar урә-, Kalm. урос- "to flow."
Ts. *boɔד̩ “haystack” = Mo. buqul, Kh. буqул id.

Ts. *t'oɡʊ “calf” = Mo. t'uyul, Ord. t'uyul, Kh. t'ugol, Bur. Alar. тугал, Kalm. тугл id.

Ts. *nomʊ “bow” (Dag. nem id. is of a different origin) = Mo. numu, Ord. numu, Kh. нум, Bur. Alar nomʊ, Kalm. нун id.


Ts. *t̪uɡʊ “particular, unusual, remarkable” = Mo. чуqум, Kh. т̪уq̪ʊм “real, true, particular,” Bur. Alar sanб id.

2. *u before *a

Ts. *uɡʊ “Mongolian lariat” = Mo. ура id., ураqa “a sling used to catch birds,” Ord. урача “lacet avec lequel on prend des oiseaux, lacet pour entraver un pied à un cheval qui vient boire,” Ord. ура < *уγура “parce à nœud coulant pour prendre les chevaux,” Kh. урго “Mongolian lariat,” Kalm. ург id. (Ord. урга, Kalm. урго, and Mo. уγура = Turkic урγура id. > Russian уγура). The vowel of the first syllable became short in some of the Mongolian languages long ago and even in the Secret History there is only a form hurahala- “to make slings.”


Ts. *уq̪ɪ̄r̪̃t̪̄s̪̄a “sharp” = Mo. qurчa, Ord. qu'r̪̃s̪̄а id., Kh. чуq̪ɪ̄р̪̃с̪̄, Kalm. чуртсо id.

Haenisch, op. cit., p. 79.
Ts. bu't'sa- “to return, to go back,” Dag. bu't'si- id. < Kh. = Mo. buça-, Ord. bu't'sa-, Kh. bu't'so- id.

Ts. um'ta- “to sleep,” Dag. wəan'ta- id. = Mo. unta- ~ umta-, Ord. um'ta-, Kh. un'to-, Kalm. unto- id.

Ts. bulān “corner” = Mo. bulung < *bulan, Ord. bulən, Kh. bullo-, Kalm. bulə id.

Ts. bulāk “source, fountain,” Dag. bulār id. = Mo. bulay, Ord. bulak, Kh. bullo-, Kalm. bulə id.

Ts. t'yră “town” = Mo. tura “fortress, castle,” Ord. t'yrə “nom mongol de la ville de Chen mou hien,” Kh. t'yrə “citadel, building, small town,” Bur. Alar t'yră “town” = Ma. tura “a wooden pillar supporting the ceiling.”

Ts. un'ya “colt” = Mo. un'ya, Ord. un'aga “poulin dans sa première année,” Kh. un'ya, Bur. Alar un'aga, Kalm. unya id.


We have seen that the vowel *a of the second syllable does not influence the development of the vowel *u of the first syllable in the Tsongol dialect, while *u of the second syllable transforms it into o.

III. The Vowel *ö of the First Syllable

The Common Mongolian *ö of the first syllable has been preserved in almost all Mongolian languages. The correspondences are the following:

CoMo. *ö, SH ö, P ö, Ord. ö, Kh. ö, Bur. Alar (and also Tunka, Bökhon, Ekhirit Bulgat, and Barguzin) ö, Kalm. ö, e.g., CoMo. *önge “color,” SH önge (HAEHISCH’s transcription ongge), P önge, Mo. önge, Ord. öngö, Kh. öngö, Bur. Alar öngö, Kalm. öng id. = Turkic *ön > Uigur, Chagatai öŋ or ön “face, front side,” Telengit, Kirgiz ön “color, outer appearance.”

In certain Mongolian languages and dialects *ö and *ü converged, and both vowels have become ü or its further development ŭ. Thus the Eastern Buriat dialects, Aga and Khori (in Trans-
do not distinguish between *ö and *ü and both vowels have become u, as, e. g., urqöö “color.” The Dagur language also does not distinguish between the vowels *ö and *ü which have become u, as, e. g., k’u’k “blue” = Kh. ṕu’x̌a, Kalm. ṕök id.\(^{39}\)

The Mogol material collected by Ramstedt is quantitatively too small to reach any conclusion although Ramstedt remarks that *ö and *ü in many cases are confused.\(^{40}\)

We may add that in the Eastern Buriat dialects the original vowels *ö and *ü do not affect the vowel of the following syllable differently; e. g., in the Aga and Khor dialect the long vowel after u (of both origins) is either ë or ü: cf. Aga urzëp - urzëp “I saw,” urʤëp - urʤëp “I gave,” while in the Khalkha language the vowel u < *ü requires after it the long vowel ë and ë < *ö requires the long vowel ü, e. g., urzët “after having seen,” but ügït “after having given.” Thus the data of languages or dialects not distinguishing between *ö and *ü are of no value for our purpose.

There is a third group of Mongolian languages in which both *ö and *ü are preserved. Although they distinguish between *ö and *ü, they seem, at first glance, to do so inconsistently. We refer to the Ordos dialect in which *ö sometimes yields ë, but sometimes also u, as, e. g., Ord. őlös- “to be hungry” = Kh. íllê-., Bur. Alar őldê- id., but Ord. muurgù- “to bow” = Kh. mörga-, Bur. Alar mörgê- id.

We have seen that *ö of the first syllable has become in the Ordos language u before *u of the second syllable, but it is o before the vowel o < *â of the second syllable. We find that *ö remains ë in the Ordos language only before *e of the second syllable, but it becomes u before *ü of the second syllable. Thus we can establish the following proportion: o : u = ő : ü.

1. *ö before *ü

Ord. muurgù- (~ mörgö-) “to bow” = Mo. mörgü-, Kh. mörga-,

\(^{39}\) Поппе, Дагурское наречие, p. 113.


Ord. murgu (- mörgö) "silver" = Mo. mönggü, Kh. möngga, Bur. Alar mönggö, Kalm. möngg id., cf. SH münggū (H munggu) id.

Ord. würum "tarière, vrille, vilebrequin, foret" = Mo. örüm, Kh. örm, Kalm. örm "gimlet."

Ord. würmus (- örgösw) "épine, piquant" = Mo. örgesün *örgüsün, Kh. örgüs, Kalm. örgesen "thorn."

Ord. undür "high" = Mo. öndür, Kh. önam, Bur. Alar öndür, Kalm. öndür id., cf. SH ündür (H undur) id.

Ord. wür "feather" = Mo. ödüän, Kh. öddä, Kalm. ödän id., cf. SH ödün (H odun) id.


It is to be noticed that in several words the vowel *ö became ü under the influence of the vowel *ü of the second syllable even in the Secret History. Is this evidence that the Secret History was transcribed in a dialect which was an ancestor of the Ordos language?

It is known that in the dialects the vowel *e of the first syllable becomes ø or its further developments (Kh. ö, Bur. Alar ö) under the influence of the following syllable; as, e. g., Mo. emüne "in front," Dag. emel id. = Ord. ömönö, Kh. ömän, Kalm. ömän "before, in front." But in several words *e of the first syllable has also become ü or w. Cf. Mo. edür "day" = SH üdür (H udur) id., P üdürëin "the whole day," Ord. wür "day"; Mo. elgü- "to suspend" = Ord. ulgu- id.; Mo. ergü- "to lift" = Ord. iرغ- id.; Mo. ebül "winter" = SH übül (H ubul), P übül id. Although the correspondences in such words are inconsistent in all languages, it is not impossible that the development *e > ü took place under the influence of the vowel *ü of the second syllable similarly to *ö > w in the Ordos language. Apparently *e became first ö and the latter became, under the influence of the vowel *ü of the second syllable, ü (or w): *edür > ödür > wür. If this

41 H means Haenisch's transcription.
42 Поппе, Дагурско наречие, p. 108.
notion is correct, the development *ö > u in the Ordos language must be of great antiquity.

As for the double forms Ord. munγw ~ möŋöö “silver,” urγwsmu ~ örgöũtu “pin,” and so on, they belong to different dialects of the Ordos language, just as the double forms with y and o (doso ~ dusu).

2. *ö before *e

The vowel *ö remains ö in the Ordos language before *e. In the Secret History the vowel *e of the second syllable becomes ö in numerous cases after the vowel *ö of the first syllable. In the dictionary Muqaddimat 'al-Adab, the primary *e of the second syllable remains e even in cases when in Written Mongolian the vowel of the second syllable is a rounded one, i.e., a secondary ö < *e.

Ord. ölőŋ “herbes épaiisses constituées par les feuilles du lasi-agrostis splendens,” Mu. ōleng, SH ölęŋ (H ōlęŋ) = Mo. öłöŋ, Kh. öłlä “hard grass,” Kalm. ölŋ “grass, meadow.”


Ord. ömök “help, reinforcement,” SH ömere- (H omere-) “to assemble, to defend together” = Mo. ömög < *ömeg “help, defense,” Kh. ümak “defense, guard,” Kalm. ömär- “to defend.”

Ord. önör “qui est en grand nombre, nombreux, famille,” SH önor (H onor without translation) in the expression önır nikenten “belonging to one family, to one clan” = Mo. önör < *önër, Kh. ünär “having a large family or many children,” Kalm. önır id. (*önër has nothing in common with Mo. ünür < *hünür < *jünür “smell, odor”).


Ord. k'önđölön “transversal, across,” SH köndelen (H·kön- 
delen), Mu. köndelen id. = Mo. köndelen, Kh. čöndala, Bur. Alar čöndöölön, Kalm. köndölön id.


Ord. k’öörönkö “sement, levure (pour faire du koumyss), biens, fortune” = Mo. köörönge < *köornege, Kh. čööränge “yeast; fortune, capital,” Kalm. köörög “seeds, yeast.”

Ord. möltöl- “to detach” = Mo. möttöl- id.

Ord. mön^kö “eternal, everlasting,” SH mungke (HAENISCH), möngke (PELLIOT),

Mu. mön'ke, P mönk'a (should be interpreted as mönk'e) = Mo. möngke, Kh. mönxa, Bur. Alar mön^kö, Kalm. mön^kö id.

Ord. mörö “shoulder,” SH mürü (H muru) = Mo. mörö < *mörö id., Kh. mürä, Kalm. mörni id. = Tung. C. mürä, Tung. Barguzin mürä, Ma. meyiren “shoulder.”

Ord. möron “river,” SH muren (H murem), Mu. más “sea” = Mo. más, Kh. mürä, Kalm. mörni “river.”

Ord. möxö- “to repair, to mend, to patch” = Mo. nökö- < *nöke-, Kh. mönxa-, Kalm. nök- id.

Ord. sogöö- “to kneel,” SH sogöö-, Mu. sogöö- = Mo. sogöö- < *sogöö-, Kh. sogöö-, Kalm. sogöö id.

Ord. tölö- “to indemnise, dédommager,” Mu. töle- = Mo. tölö- < *töle-, Kh. tölö-, Kalm. töl- “to pay.”

Ord. törö “government, empire,” SH törö “rule, custom” = Mo. törö < *töre, Kh. töre, Kalm. törö id. = Turkic Uigur, Anatolien, Chagatai, Koman töre “rule, law.”

Ord. böögö “quail” = Mo. böögö < *böögö, Kh. búvan, Kalm. bööö id. > Chagatai böögöm id.

Ord. böögö “quail” = Mo. böögö < *böögö, Kh. búvan, Kalm. bööö id. > Chagatai böögöm id.

Ord. böögö “quail” = Mo. böögö < *böögö, Kh. búvan, Kalm. bööö id. > Chagatai böögöm id.

Ord. bökö "strong," SH bökö, Mu. böke id. = Mo. böke, Kh. bökö, Kalm. bökö id.

Ord. bökön "small flies" = Mo. bökö < *böken id.

Ord. bökö "hump," SH bokotur (= böketür) "having a hump," Mu. böke "hump" = Mo. bökö < *böke, Kh. bökö, Kalm. bökö id.

Ord. bölek "group," SH bölek "horde, troop," Mu. bölek "another" = Mo. böleg < böleg, Kh. böllük "group, piece; chapter," Kalm. bölek id. = Turkic Uzbek bölük "part, another."

Ord. bögüm "near," Houa i i iu dögüm "convenient" = Mo. dögüm < *dögüm "convenient, near," Kh. dögüm "convenient, favorable, near."

Ord. bököm "depression in the soil" = Mo. tököm < *tökm, Kh. tököm "depression."

Ord. dörö "anneau qu’on met au nez des boeufs" = Mo. dörö < *döre, Kh. döre "a bridle for oxen."

Ord. dörwö "four," SH dörben, Mu. dörben = Mo. dörben, Kh. dörwe, Bur. Alar dörwe, Kalm. dörwe id.

Ord. dötö "direct, short (a way)," SH dötelen "approaching" = Mo. döte, Kh. dötä, Bur. Alar dötä "near."


Ord. gökö "breast," SH kokan (= köken) "female breast," Mu. köken id. = Mo. köken < *köken, Kh. köken id. = Turkic Chagatai kökältä "foster-brother."

Ord. götöl- "to lead," SH kötöl- (H kotol-) = Mo. kötel-, Kh. kötel-, Kalm. kötel- id.


Thus in all cases Ordos has the vowel ö before the vowel *e in the first syllable. When the first syllable is followed by a long ü < *egü the vowel *ö of the first syllable becomes ü, although the second syllable contains the vowel *e; cf. Ord. gökö- "to suck, to sip," Mu. kökebe "sucked" = Mo. kökö- < *köke-, Kh. köke-, Kalm. kökö- "to suck," but Ord. guwür "container for liquids"

"Mostaert, Dictionnaire ordos, p. 155."
= Mo. köbüür < Colloquial, Mo. *kökegür, Kh. χöχüür “a bag for liquids” (literally: “sucker”).

The vowel *ö remains as such also before *i:

Ord. dzöönök < *jönig “qui est tombé en enfance” = Mo. jönög < *jönig “senile,” Kh. dzööŋ “to become senile,” dzööŋ’təak “senile.”

Ord. mösn “ice” = Mo. mösün < *mölsün < *mölisün, Kh. mös, Bur. Alar məξəhəŋ < *mölisün, Khor. məξəhəŋ < *mölisün, Kalm. mösn < mölsün < *mölisün, Dag. məξ id.

The observations made above enable us to draw certain conclusions. The first is that we now have a satisfactory solution for the transcription of the rounded vowels of the second syllable in Written Mongolian: after *o of the first syllable the vowel is u, when the vowel *o of the first syllable becomes ý in the Ordos language (mʊn “tree” = Mo. modun); after *o of the first syllable the vowel is a secondary o (< *a) in cases in which the vowel of the first syllable is o in the Ordos language (oron “place” = Mo. oron < *oran); after *o of the first syllable the vowel is ү, when the vowel is u in the Ordos language (mʊrgʊ “to bow” = Mo. mörgʊ); after *ö of the first syllable the vowel is a secondary ö (< *e), when the vowel of the first syllable remains ö in the Ordos language. It is also possible to distinguish between the primary and secondary *u in the second syllable: it is a primary *u in cases in which the vowel *u of the first syllable becomes o in the Tsongol dialect (oso “water” = Mo. usun), but it is a secondary u < *a in cases in which the vowel *u of the first syllable remains ү in the Tsongol dialect (χʊğaná “mouse” = Mo. quluyana < *qulayana).

The second conclusion is more interesting from the purely theoretical point of view. The vocalic harmony in agglutinative languages is usually considered nothing but the dependence of the vowels of the non-initial syllables upon the character of the vowel of the first syllable.45 This is correct, but on the other hand it cannot be denied that in the Mongolian languages it is the

vowel of the second syllable which influences the vowel of the first syllable, although this has nothing to do with vocalic harmony. It is known that the vowel *i of the first syllable becomes another vowel under the influence of the second syllable: Kh. *māχā “meat” = Mo. *miqan id. The vowel *ii of the second syllable transforms the vowel *e of the first syllable into a rounded front vowel in many Mongolian languages. The vowel *i of the second syllable transforms the back vowel of the first syllable into a mid vowel in Khalkha and many other languages, and into a front vowel in the Kalmuk language (cf. Kh. *mōr, Kalm. *mōr “horse” = Mo. *morin). In another article, we have demonstrated that the groups *uya and *ūge, constituting the original second and third syllables, developed, at an early stage, into *oγa and *öge and that the latter became ā and ō respectively. They greatly influenced the vocalism of the first syllable. Here we may add that the groups *uya > *oγa and *ūge > *öge resulted in different vowels in the principal groups of the Mongolian languages—in long rounded vowels in the Eastern Mongolian languages (cf. *juruya > *jiroya > Kh. Ṯozor “ambler”), but in long unrounded vowels in the Western Mongolian languages (cf. *juruya > *jiroya > Kalm. Ḹozor “ambler”), while in both groups of languages *uya > *oγa has labialized the vowel of the first syllable (*jiroya > Kh. Ḹozor and Kalm. Ḹozor). And here in this article we have seen that in certain dialects the primary *u and o < *a influenced the vowel *o of the first syllable in a different manner. The same can be remarked about the vowels *u and *u < *a influencing in different manners the vowel *u of the first syllable. We have also seen that the vowels *ii and ō < *e of the second syllable have a different effect upon the vowel *ō of the first syllable. Thus our general conclusion is that the history of the vocalism of the first syllable in the Mongolian languages depends mainly upon the primary character of the vowels of the second syllable.

46 This phenomenon is known under the name of “breaking”: Ramstedt, “Das Schriftmongolische und die Urgamundart phonetisch verglichen,” §§55.
47 Ramstedt, op. cit., §88. An exception is the Dagur language where *e of the first syllable does not undergo this influence. Cf. Pope, Dagurskoe narodnie, p. 108.