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ОЛОН УЛСЫН МОНГОЛЧ ЭРДЭМТНИЙ V ИХ ХУРАЛ  
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SOME REFLECTIONS ON PARAGRAPH ONE OF THE  
SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS

Much of the First Chapter of the Secret History of the Mongols is taken up by the genealogy of Chinggis Qaḡ, the legendary beginnings of the Mongol people and the origins of its various clans. The first section, or paragraph, of the First Chapter is rather interesting on several grounds and has been the subject of conflicting interpretations. The text (in translation) reads as follows: 'The origin of Chinggis Qa'an. There was a blue-grey wolf born with his destiny from Heaven Above. His wife was a fallow doe. They came crossing the Tenggis. After they had settled at the source of the River Onan at Burqan Qaldun, Bataciqan was born to them /1/.

The opening line Chinggis Qa'an-nu huja'ur forms, as it were, a title for the whole genealogical portion of the chapter i.e. 4-60. Scholars in the past, including the pioneers Pelliot and Haenisch, and more recently Damdinsuren, Doerfer and Ozawa, do not regard the opening line as a title, but connect it logically with what follows: 'The origin (i.e. the original ancestor) of Chinggis Qa'an was...' However, as first surmised by Naka, and subsequently confirmed and explained by Poppe and Mostaert, the opening words stand per se /2/. There are, of course, arguments in support of both interpretations. For my part, like Ligeti, Murakami and Cleaves /3/, I, too, am in favour of separating the first line from the rest; however, I am not too sanguine about it in view of the Chinese sectional summary which runs counter to such an argument /4/. (As already shown by other investigators, the Chinese title Yuan-ch'ao pi-shih was undoubtedly given to the work by the Ming editors, who also created a Mongolian title for it in Chinese transcription) /5/.

Chinggis Qa'an is the title of the conqueror in the later Mongol tradition. The title assumed by, or rather conferred on, Temujin and by which he was known in his lifetime was Cinggis Qaḡ. The change from Chinggis Qaḡ to Chinggis Qa'an (=Qayan) occurred probably early in the reign of Qubilai (in my opinion some time between 1260 and 1271), and the Secret History text, which originally had only Cinggis Qaḡ throughout, was amended accordingly (6). As for the meaning of this title of Turkish

natural gender	masculine		feminine	honorific form	unhonorific form
	sing;	pl.	sing -pl.		
present	-nu	-nuḡ	-ni	-nuḡ	-nu
and future	-yu	*-yui	-yi	*-yui	-yu
tense	-u	-ui-ai	-i	-ui	-u
		-d			
past	-ba	-bai	-bi	-bai	-ba
perfect and	-ju'u	-ju'ui	-ji'-jigi	-ju'ui	-ju'u
imperfect	-lu'a	-lu'ai	-ligin=	-la'a	< -lu'a
tense	-la'a	-la'a	< -liyi	-la'ai	
	-a	-ai	*-i	*-ai	

origin, I have indicated elsewhere that there is strong evidence to show that it does not mean Universal Ruler, as generally accepted, but the Fierce Ruler /7/.

According to Paragraph One, the couple that originated the line of Cinggis Qan was a blue-grey wolf (borte cino) and a fallow doe (qo'ai maral). In the early legend of Mongol origins these are real animals, as in the mythology of the ancient Turks whose totemic ancestor was likewise a wolf. However, in the later Mongol tradition they became a human couple: Borte Cinu-a and Too-a Maral, i.e. Blue-grey Wolf and Beautiful Doe (reading yoo-a for quu-a). This is not surprising, since from ancient times the Mongols, like the Turks and other peoples, used names of animals as proper names/8/.

As with so many other socio-cultural traits and traditions, the Turkish- and the Mongolian - speaking tribes of Inner Asia shared a common heritage. The Mongolian Heaven Above (de'ere tenggeri), also commonly referred to as the Eternal Heaven (mongke tenggeri) is of course, the Blue Sky Above (üze kök tanrı) or Heaven Above (uze tanrı) of the early Turks - the physical sky or firmament which is identified in both cultures with the Supreme Power governing the destiny of all creatures. Hence also the destiny, ordained by Heaven Above, of the blue-grey wolf, the Mongols' totemic ancestor. Later, in the Lamaist historiographical tradition imported from Tibet, Borte Cinu-a is transformed into a descendant of the legendary rulers of India and Tibet, and into a Buddhist avatar; however, the correlation with the Turco-Mongolian shamanistic Heaven is still evident in his designation as 'son of Heaven' in the Tibetan Blue Annals and the 17th century Mongolian chronicles/9/. As is known, the qavans of the Orkhon Turks were also designated as 'Heaven-born'(tanrıda bolıms, /10/ and indeed, the expression 'Heaven-born' (t'ien-sheng) is the one found also in the Chinese sectional summary in the Secret History rendering de'ere tenggeri-ece Jaja'atu /11/. As Professor Gaadamb-Ohas shows, in the early Mongol world-conception reflected in the Secret History, to be endowed with destiny from Heaven Above is not an exclusive characteristic of Chinggis' legendary ancestor, but a quality shared by all living creatures /12/. Nevertheless, the fact that Heaven is mentioned at the very outset of the genealogy - just as it is at the beginning of the Orkhon inscriptions - indicates in my view a special intervention of the Supreme Power in the origin of Cinggis' lineage, as it will be the case throughout the career of the future world conqueror /13/.

Tenggis, glossed in the Chinese interlinear translation as 'name of (a body of) water' is the Old Turkish and Uighur term

teniz meaning 'sea, ocean', which can also refer, of course, to a great lake. Scholars have, in fact, identified the Tenggis of the Secret History with different lakes and even with a river. For some it is the Caspian Sea, for others it is the Tengis River of northern Mongolia; others still identify it with Lake Khulun in NE Inner Mongolia and with Lake Baikal. In the Yuan History (Yuan-shih), the Caspian is mentioned four times under the name of 'The Wide Tengis Sea' (kuan t'ien-chi-ssu hai) /14/ and, in more recent times, the Caspian was still called Degiz by Turkish-speaking people /15/. But the Aral Sea and Lake Balkash were also called Tengiz /16/. From a purely geographical point of view, the Baikal would rank as the best candidate for the First Ancestor's crossing being just north of Mount Burqan Qaldun, i.e. Kentei Qan, as already pointed out by Gurulev /17/. Furthermore, later sources do indicate that the Tenggis Sea crossed by Borte Cinu-a was in the north /18/.

However, all these indications are in no way decisive since the whole question of the migration of the Mongol tribe is a very complex one. Both the Altan tobci of Lubsangdanjin and the Altan Tobci (anon.) say that the clan-name 'Monggol' originates from Borte Cinu-a and Yoo-a Maral /19/, but no such statement is found in the Secret History, possibly because this fact is implied in the opening line of the work: Cinggis Qa'an-nu huja'ur. The tribe of the Mongols proper is called, later in the Secret History, 'the Monggol people' (Monggol ulus, Monggol irgen) /20/. On the basis of the Secret History account, it would appear that the original nucleus of this tribe, represented by the blue-grey wolf of the legend, migrated from an area beyond the Tenggis to the region of Kentei Qan, where it eventually settled. According to another ancient account recorded by the Persian historian Rasid al-Din, these early 'immigrants' led by Borte Cino, came from an enclosed valley of the Ergene Qan, a name which means, according to Rasid, 'steep cliff. There they lived and multiplied. On their journey to 'another country' (diger welayat) they had to cross the arm, or branch, of a large river by means of a kalak, i.e. a raft made of brushwood /21/. It is worth noting that the Altan Tobci and other chronicles also say that Borte Cinu-a went to 'another country' (Jad-un pajar) after crossing the Tenggis Sea /22/.

In the origin legends of the Turks recorded in the Chinese sources we find the same themes: a cavern leading to a plain enclosed by mountains where the wolf's descendants lived and multiplied for several generations before coming out and eventually settling south of a mountain range. One of the legends says that, originally, the ancestors of the Turks lived to the

west of the Western Sea (note this reference to a large body of water), and that their tribe was defeated and exterminated by a neighbouring country. Only one boy survived, who was reared by the she-wolf. Later he had intercourse with and her made her pregnant. The wolf then fled (or, according to a variant version, was transported by a spirit) east of the Western Sea, to a mountain north, or north-west of Kao-ch'ang (Turfan). It was in a cavern in the mountain that the she-wolf took refuge and gave birth to ten boys. They took wives from the outside and their descendants eventually migrated to the south of the Chin-shan, i.e. the Altai Mountains (note, again, the theme of the migration to the south of a mountain range). In another tradition, likewise recorded in a Chinese source, there is also the mention of a white deer with golden horns coming out of the ancestral cavern. Professor Sinor has published an interesting and illuminating paper in which these legends and their variants are compared and critically discussed /23/.

The localization of Eredene Qun and the meaning of this name are moot points /24/ and I shall not go into them because, irrespective of whether it was a real place or not, the Ergene Qun has little or no relevance in so far as the Mongol legends of origin are concerned. As noted by Pelliot long ago /25/, these legends, recorded in the Secret History and by Rasid al-Din, are a borrowing from the Turkish legends and cannot, therefore, be regarded as reflecting historical events such as a movement of tribal groups from eastern or western Mongolia, or from the north. The ancestral wolf, the crossing of a large body of water (lake or river), the migration to a mountain site, and even the presence of a deer - all these elements are common to the two traditions, of which the Turkish is historically the earliest.

In view of this, I believe that it is futile to attempt to identify the Tenggis with a real lake or river, and the totemic ancestors with real people. It would seem that the ancestors of the Mongol tribesmen, who in the 12th-13th centuries inhabited the Onon-Kerulen region (south and south-east of the Great Kental) /26/, had at some undetermined time been under the political and cultural influence of the Turks to the extent of assimilating to their own body of traditions the Turkish legends of origin, of course with due modifications (such as the change in sex of the ancestral wolf and the metamorphosis of the deer into the fallow doe and the wolf's mate). Conversely, we must assume that the Mongol legend is of much more recent origin, and borrowed from the Turks after the Mongols rose to power in the 13th century so as to give the 'golden lineage' of Cinggis Qan a fitting genealogy and an origin worthy of the great conqueror. In

either case the Turkish cultural influence is evident. Indeed, such an influence is apparent not only in the legends of origin, but also in the very language of the Secret History - both phraseology and vocabulary - the Turkish contents of which are far greater than usually assumed /27/. Besides the story of the wolf and key words like tenggis and cinggis, there are literally hundreds of proper names and terms of Turkish origin in the Mongol language of Chinggis Qan's time /28/. Many passages of the Secret History echo the strong and simple phraseology of the Orkhon inscriptions. The Orkhon, with the old Uighur capital at Gara Baiyasun, and Mount Burqan Qaldun are only a few hundred miles apart. Already in Chinggis' time the seat of power of the mighty Mongols is again on the Orkhon, at Qaha Gorum ('Black Rock' - also a Turkish name) and Gara Gurum is near Gara Baiyasun, perhaps not by pure coincidence. There Ogodei will rule as 'Qayan', i.e. with the royal title of the Uighur rulers - Chinggis was only a qan - and from there the court secretaries and scribes will draft Jarliqs in Uighur script /29/.

All this reminds us once more how close the cultures of the Turks and the Mongols must have been in the vast country which was for so long the homeland of both these peoples, and how precious indeed for the study of their early culture contacts is a work like the Secret History of the Mongols.

#### Notes

1. See I. de Rachewiltz, Index to the Secret History of the Mongols (Bloomington, 1972), 13, for the Mongolian text in transcription.
2. For these conflicting interpretations, see A. Mostaert, Sur quelques passages de l'Histoire secrète des Mongols (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), xii-xx; G. Doerfer, Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen, I (Wiesbaden, 1963), 317; Ozawa Shigeo, Gencho hishi zenshaku, I (Tokyo, 1984, 3-8).
3. See L. Ligeti, A mongolok titkos tortenete (Budapest, 1962), 9; Murakami Masatsugu, Mongoru hishi, I (Tokyo, 1970), 5; F.W. Cleaves, The Secret History of the Mongols (Harvard U.P., 1982), 1.
4. See Mostaert, op. cit., xvii
5. Cf. ibid., ix-xi
6. See I. de Rachewiltz, Qan, Qa'an and the Seal of Guyug., in K. Sagaster and M. Weiers, eds, Documenta Barbarorum. Festschrift für Walther Heissig zum 70. Geburtstag

- (Wiesbaden, 1983), 272-281.
7. See my forthcoming article 'The Title Cinggis Qan/Qavan Re-examined.'
  8. See Mostaert, op. cit., xviii-xix; C. Sodnom in *Mongolyn Sudlal* 4, 15 (1964). 40. Cf. K. Uray-Kohalmi, 'Syncretismus im Staatskult der fruhen Dschingisiden' in W. Heissig and H.-J. Klimkiet, eds, *Synkretismus in der Religionen Zentralasiens* (Wiesbaden, 1987), 137 ff.
  9. See, e.g., H.-R. Kampfe, *Das Asaravci Neretu-yin Teuke des Byamba ERke Daicing Alias Samba Jasa* (Wiesbaden, 1983), 47
  10. See T. Tekin, *A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic* (Bloomington - The Hague, 1968), 379b.
  11. Yuan-ch'ao pi-shih (ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an ed.) 1, 1b
  12. S. Gaadamba, *Nuuc tovcoony nuucsaas* (Ulan-Bator, 1976), 27-35.
  13. See I. de Rachewiltz in *Papers on Far Eastern History* 7 (March 1973), 27-28.
  14. Yuan-shih (Po-na ed.) 50, 2a; 63, 33 a; 121, 3b; 122, 13b.
  15. See E. Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources* (repr. London, 1967), 1, 297, n. 722.
  16. See Doerfer, op. cit., III (Wiesbaden, 1967), 206.
  17. S.A. Gurulev, 'O drevnikh i srednevekovykh nazvaniyakh Baikala'. *ISO AN SSSR* 11.3(1974), 102-107.
  18. See Mostaert, op.cit., xix (quoting the Altan tobci äanonü; Lubsan Danzan (Altan Tobci ("Zolotoe Skazanie"), tr. N.P. Sastina (Moscow, 1973), 53.
  19. See Lubsan Danzan, op. cit., 53; C.R. Bawden, *The Mongol Chronicle Altan Tobci* (Wiesbaden, 1955), 113.
  20. 189, 202, 272.
  21. Rasid al-din. *Sbornik letopisel*, I/1, tr. L.A. Khetagurov (Moscow-Leningrad, 1952), 153-54; 1/2, tr. L.A. Khetagurov and O.I. Smirnova (Moscow-Leningrad, 1952), 9-10.
  22. See Altan Tobci. *A Brief History of the Mongols* by bLo bzan bsTan 'jin, with A Critical Introduction by A. Mostaert, and An Editor's Foreword by F. W. Cleaves (Harvard U.P., 1952), I.6; Bawden, op. cit., 36.4.
  23. D. Sinor, 'The Legendary Origin of the Turks', in E.V. Zygas and P. Voorheis, eds, *Folklorica. Festschrift für Felix J. Oinas* (Bloomington, 1982), 223-257. Cf. J.A. Boyle in *Journal of the Anglo-Mongolian Society* 2.1 (June 1975, 60-69).
  24. Cf. Tamura Jitsuzo in *Acta Asiatica* 24 (1973), 1-14; P. Pelliot in *T'oung Pao* 26 (1929), 214, n. 2. Sinor (op. cit., 235) is of the opinion that the 'ancestral cavern', where in later times the Turkish qavans went every year in person, or sent officials to sacrifice, was a real cavern, whereas the

Erdene Gun cavern is a legendary place, and that the two should not be confused. I concur with Prof. Sinor's interpretation.

25. See Pelliot, loc. cit.
26. This, the 'Onankerule' of William of Rubruck's *Itinerarium*, was the traditional habitat of the Mongqol tribe. See P. Pelliot, *Recherches sur les chretiens d'Asie Centrale et d'Extreme-Orient* (Paris, 1973), 104.
27. See, provisionally, N. Poppe in *Central Asiatic Journal* 1 (1955), 36-42; and T. Gulensoy in *Turkoloji Dergisi* (Ankara) 5, 1 (1973), 93-135.
28. Cf. Kara in *Journal Asiatique* 269 (1981), 317-323; and L. Bese in *Acta Orientalia Hung.* 32 (1978), 353-369.
29. For a preliminary investigation of Turco-Mongol relations in the 13th and 14th centuries, see I. de Rachewiltz in M. Rossabi, ed., *China Among Equals* (University of California Press, 1983), 281-310. The subject deserves a thorough investigation - both historical and philological - necessary also to clear up a good deal of confusion, much of which goes back to the 12th-13th centuries. A good example of confusion in terminology is the case of the name 'Kerelt' ((Chin. Ch'leh-lieh), which in the Chinese sources of this period may designate either the famous tribe of Mongolia, or 'Turk' in general (Uighur, Ongut, etc.). Cf. the similar use of 'Frank' in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance period in the Middle East and throughout Asia.