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Some Reflections on So-Called Written Mongolian*

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The starting point of this investigation was the beautiful facsimile of the Turfan fragment of Čhos-kyi 'od-zer's translation of, and commentary to, Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* published by ERICH HAENISCH¹. The very first word of this long fragment is *oytorγui* 'the sky', a word that occurs eight times in the fragment, seven times in the form *oytorγui* and once in the form *oytorγu*.²

Comparing these forms with those found in other texts in Middle and Preclassical Mongolian (for the present purpose I use these designations, to which I shall return later, in the sense commonly accepted by most Mongolists today), we observe in the *Secret History* that the word occurs three times as *hoqtorqui* (= *hoqtorγui*) and twice as *hoqtorqu* (= *hoqtorγu*).³ In the *Hua-i i-yü* of 1389, it appears also in the same two forms, i.e. with and without final *i*.⁴

In both the *Secret History* and the *Hua-i i-yü*, the word *hoqtorqu(i)* is used with the meaning of 'empty', but in the 13th and 14th centuries it also had the meaning of 'sky, firmament' (< '[great] void' < 'emptiness').⁵ The regular form in 13th-14th century

* This is a revised version of a paper I read at the International Symposium on Mongolian Culture held in Taipei on May 29-31, 1992. The present version completely supersedes the former.

¹ E. HAENISCH, *Mongolica der Berliner Turfan-Sammlung. I. Ein buddhistisches Druckfragment vom Jahre 1312*. Berlin 1954. (Abhandlungen der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Klasse für Sprachen, Literatur und Kunst, Jg. 1953,3), Texttafeln (156r-167v). See also F. W. CLEAVES, "The *Bodistw-a čari-a awatar-un tayilbur* of 1312 by Čosgi Odsir", *HJAS* 17 (1954), 1-129, pl. i-xxiv.

² See CLEAVES, op. cit., 64b.

³ See *Wörterbuch*, 76; *SH Index*, 233b.

⁴ See *Matériel*, 61. For the nominal *-i* ~ zero cf. *mayu* ~ *mayui*, *qarangγu* ~ *qarangγui*, *ülegü* ~ *ülegüi*, etc. See B. YA. VLADIMIROV, *Sravnitel'naya grammatika mongol'skogo pis'mennogo yazyka i khalkhaskogo narečiya. Vvedenie i fonetika*. Leningrad 1929, 298. For the initial *h* in Middle Mongolian see P. PELLISOT, "Les mots à *H* initiale, aujourd'hui amuie, dans le mongol des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles", *JA* 206 (1925), 221, no. 38.

⁵ See L. LIGETI, "Les fragments du *Subhāṣitaratnanidhi* mongol en écriture 'Phags-pa. Mongol

Preclassical Mongolian is *oγtoryu(i)* which corresponds to the Middle Mongolian form without initial *h*, for this sound was not represented in the old Uighur-Mongolian script.⁶

In the extant Preclassical Mongolian material of the 15th and 16th centuries, we encounter *oγtoryui* ~ *oγtaryui*, the latter form being unattested in the earlier documents.⁷

From the 17th century onward, *oγtaryu(i)* becomes the standard form in Written Mongolian.⁸ This development is evident in the textual history of the Mongolian version of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, which may be taken as a perfect illustration of the phenomenon. As I have said, the word *oγtoryu* occurs once and *oγtoryui* seven times in the 1312 Daidu printed edition of this work to which the Turfan fragment belongs. In the Olon Süme fragments of the same work dating from the 16th century, *oγtoryui* occurs only once, and *oγtaryui* seven times. In the *Tanĵur* edition, as well as in the non-canonical versions of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* such as the Kowalewski MS. edited by VLADIMIRCOV, the Delhi MS. L 6 edited by LOKESH CHANDRA, and the Copenhagen MS. M 480, the regular form throughout is *oγtaryui*.⁹

The first attested occurrence of *oγtaryui* is in two Buddhist texts printed in 1431, where that form alternates with *oγtoryui*, the latter being still more frequent (2:1).¹⁰

Thus, in the earliest specimens of the written language we find solely the form with the vowel *o* in the second syllable, reflecting the colloquial pronunciation of the time, i.e. Middle Mongolian. Subsequently, and gradually, this form appears in various texts alternating with that containing the vowel *a* in the second syllable, which eventually

préclassique et moyen mongol”, AOH 17 (1964), 251b.

⁶ Beside the already cited *Bodhicaryāvatāra* version, see Čhos-kyi 'od-zer's "Hymn to Mahākālī", in R. FINCH, "The Hymn to Mahākālī by Čoski Odser", *Waseda Daigaku Gogaku Kyōiku Kenkyūjo Kiyō* 28 (1984), 86b (where, however, 'oγtoγui' is a misprint for 'oγtoryui'). For the deep velar stop in Middle Mongolian see *Matériel*, xxii, n. 62.

⁷ See W. HEISSIG, "Zwei mutmaßlich mongolische Yüan-Übersetzungen und ihr Nachdruck von 1431", *ZAS* 10 (1976), 86; Idem, *Die mongolischen Handschriften-Reste aus Olon süme Innere Mongolei (16.-17. Jhd.)*. Wiesbaden 1976. (AF, 46), 594b.

⁸ See, e.g., *Altan tobči* by Blo-bzañ bstan-'jin: *Értniñ xaadyn ündéslésèn tör yosny zoziolig tovčlon xuraasan altan tovč xémèèx oršvoï. 'The Golden Summary Which Relates Briefly the Deeds of Civil Governing Established by Ancient Emperors'*, ed. by Š. BIRA. Ulan Bator 1990, 26a, 29a, 88a; *ET Index*, 147a-b; KOWALEWSKI, 430b.

⁹ See CLEAVES, loc. cit.; HEISSIG, *Die mongolischen Handschriften-Reste*, 594b; I. DE RACHEWILTZ, "The Third Chapter of Chos-kyi 'od-zer's Translation of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*: a Tentative Reconstruction", in: G. GNOLI and L. LANCIOTTI (eds), *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*. III. Rome 1988. (Serie Orientale Roma, LVI,3), 1183 (21a).

¹⁰ See HEISSIG, "Zwei mutmaßlich ...", 86. The original Mongolian versions of these two texts were probably made in the Yüan period.

comes to supersede the other in Classical Written Mongolian. This interesting phenomenon of $o > a$ in the second syllable in Written Mongolian deserves attention. As is known, the vowels of the second syllable are in general greatly reduced in the modern Mongolian languages and dialects. Vestiges of the rounded vowel are, however, still present and the (secondary) o of MM *hoqtorqu(i)* has been retained in the phonetic transcription as well as in the official spellings of this word. Cf. Kh. *ogtorgui*, Bur. *ogtorgoi*, Kalm. *oktryū*, and Ord. *uᠭᠦᠲᠦᠷᠭᠦᠢ* (in which $o > u$).¹¹

Now, RAMSTEDT, VLADIMIRCOV and POPPE¹² have demonstrated that 1) no primary vowel $*o$ existed in the non-initial syllables of Written Mongolian; 2) the vowel o in such syllables has developed from the vowel $*a$ under the influence of the o of the first syllable (progressive assimilation) — often, however, the primary form in $*a$ is preserved in Middle Mongolian and documents of the 13th century; and 3) in words with the vowel o in the first syllable, the rounded vowel of the second syllable should be transcribed in Written Mongolian as o (secondary) $< *a$ only when the vowel $*o$ in the first syllable remains o in Ordos. In the case of Ord. *uᠭᠦᠲᠦᠷᠭᠦᠢ* (WM *oytaryui*) which seems to contradict this rule (since, while the second syllable contains $*a$, the $*o$ of the first syllable has become u), the explanation given by POPPE is that this development is due to the influence of the diphthong $*ui$ which assimilates the vowel of the first syllable.¹³ However, as noted earlier, in Preclassical Mongolian, i.e. in the earliest attested form of Written Mongolian, the word *oytaryui* had an o in the second syllable, no doubt due to assimilation, but this o became an a in Classical Written Mongolian. The fact that in Written Mongolian the vowel o in non-initial syllables goes back to $*a$ fails to explain how the later development (*oytoryui* $>$ *oytaryui*) has taken place.

For the sake of comparison we may briefly look at some other words, the history of which is phonologically relevant to our investigation of *oytoryu(i)* \sim *oytaryu(i)*. Let us consider, for example, another word originally possessing initial h , such as WM *oytol-* \sim *oytal-* 'to cut'. In Middle Mongolian we find *hoqtol-* (= *hoqtol-*), and in Preclassical Mongolian *oytol-*. No form with the vowel a in the second syllable is actually attested until the 17th century.¹⁴ In the modern languages, all forms likewise

¹¹ See N. POPPE, "Remarks on the Vocalism of the Second Syllable in Mongolian", HJAS 14 (1951), 192.

¹² See G. J. RAMSTEDT, "Das Schriftmongolische und die Urgamundart phonetisch verglichen", *Journal de la soc. fin.-ougr.* 21 (1903, Helsingfors), 34; VLADIMIRCOV, *Sravnitel'naya grammatika*, 311 ff.; N. POPPE, *op. cit.*; Idem, *Introduction to Mongolian Comparative Studies*. Helsinki 1955, 53 ff. Cf. also N. POPPE, "Vladimirtsov's Grammar Forty-five Years Later", *Mongolian Studies* 2 (1975), 123-124.

¹³ POPPE, "Remarks...", 196.

¹⁴ See *Wörterbuch*, 76; *SH Index*, 233b; FINCH, "The Hymn...", 86; *Altan tobči*, 35a et passim

reflect a word with the vowel *o* in the second syllable.¹⁵

Although both *(h)oytoryui* and *(h)oytol-* began alike, as it were; underwent a parallel development in the spoken languages; and present an alternation *o ~ a* in Classical Written Mongolian, it was the form *oytol-* that eventually prevailed in the case of WM *oytol-* ~ *oytal-*.¹⁶

The case of *qočor-* ~ *qočar-* 'to stay behind' is different again. Both forms coexisted already in Middle and Preclassical Mongolian (13th and 14th c.), but the *a* form is attested only in Western Mongolian. In Classical Written Mongolian the regular form is *qočor(a)-*.¹⁷

In the spoken languages, the same pattern is evident, with forms containing the vowel *o* of the second syllable, albeit reduced to a greater or lesser degree.¹⁸

This is not the place to discuss the process of vowel assimilation in Mongolian, but in view of the divergent developments in the written language of words like *oytaryui*, *oytol-* and *qočor-*, we should attempt to explain how such developments occurred and why the word *oytaryui*, with which we are chiefly concerned, became the standard form in Classical Written Mongolian. Let us, therefore, review the situation.

Although there is no evidence for **hoytaryu(i) > hoytoryu(i)*, we must assume that this development took place in Ancient Mongolian. By the 13th and 14th century, this word was pronounced *hoqtorqu(i)* or *hoytoryui* (the value of the velar stop is not relevant at present), and its written form was *oytoryu(i)*, reflecting the vowel sounds at the time. In the 14th-15th centuries, the short, not accented rounded vowel of the second syllable (MM *o* < AM **a*) became progressively weaker in some Mongolian spoken languages, thereby losing its roundness and approaching in sound a reduced *a*

(oytal-); *ET Index*, 147a (*oytal-*); L. LIGETI (ed.), *Trésor des sentences, Subhāṣitaratnanidhi de Sa-skya Paṇḍita, traduction de Sonom Gara*. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest 1973. (Indices verborum linguae mongolicae monumentis traditorum, IV), 231-232 (*oytal-* once, *oytol-* six times); *Mahāvvyutpatti*, 240, no. 4944 (*oytal-*); KIM HYŎNG-SU, *Monghak samsö yŏn'gu*, Taegu 1974, 423b (*oytol-*); KOWALEWSKI, 430b (*oytal-*, *oytol-*); GOLSTUNSKIĪ, I, 197c (*oytol-*).

¹⁵ See POPPE, *Introduction...*, 52, 98.

¹⁶ Cf. ŠAĠĬA, 111a (*oytol-*); CÉVEL, 407b (*oytola-*); MKT, 200c (*oytol-*).

¹⁷ See *Wörterbuch*, 64; *SH Index*, 294a (*qočor-*); MA 493b (*qočar-*); and the letter of Öljeitü to Philippe le Bel, in A. MOSTAERT et F. W. CLEAVES, *Les Lettres de 1289 et 1305 des ilkhan Arjun et Öljeitü à Philippe le Bel*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1962, 55 (21), 68-70 (*qočar-*). *Qočor-* is also the form found in the Olon Süme material (see HEISSIG, *Die mongolischen Handschriften-Reste*, 597a, s.v. *qočurliy*); the classical version of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (*Tañjur* ed.), 10b *et passim*; the *Altan tobči*, 15a *et passim*; and the *Erdeni-yin tobči* (see *ET Index*, 167a-b). KOWALEWSKI, 941a-b, lists only *qočora-* (< *qočor-*; cf. GOLSTUNSKIĪ, II, 142c: *qočora-*, *qočor-*), and so does CÉVEL, 700a; whereas the MKT, 662b, registers *qočor-*. For the forms in *a* in 13th-14th c. Western Mongolian cf. POPPE, "Remarks..." , 190, 195.

¹⁸ Cf. Kh. *xocro-*, Bur. *xoohor-*, Kalm. *χoɪsr-*, Ord. *Go'is'iro-*.

(*â*, *ᠮ*) — a common and well-known phenomenon in Mongolian and one particularly evident in Khalkha.¹⁹ This instability accounts for the appearance of the form *oytaryu(i)* alongside *oytoryu(i)*, both forms coexisting, however, for a long time owing to the conservative nature of the written language.

When the Buddhist Canon was translated into Mongolian and printed editions of Buddhist works were circulated in the 17th century, the written language underwent that famous process of revision and ‘standardization’ of the orthography, vocabulary, etc. that was chiefly responsible for the establishment of the so-called Classical Mongolian language. The erudite translators and editors of that period, having to choose between *oytaryui* and *oytoryui*, opted for the former, obviously regarding the latter form as obsolete, as they had done in the case of *ĵobalang* versus *ĵobolang* ‘suffering’.²⁰ As a result, it is only *oytaryui* that we find in the canonical text of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and in other Buddhist texts.²¹

Thus, in the 17th century we have a situation where the standard Written Mongolian form *oytaryui* actually coincides with the Ancient Mongolian form. To say, however, that the Written (= Classical) Mongolian word in question represents the form of this word *at the Ancient Mongolian stage* is, of course, incorrect. Such an inference would completely disregard the historical-phonological process that the word underwent between the Ancient Mongolian and the Classical Mongolian stages.

A factor that may have helped the retention of a form like *oytaryui* versus *oytoryui* is the rather limited and specialized usage of this word, *ingri* being normally used in its place.²² It is only in comparatively recent times that the form *oytoryui* has again found

¹⁹ See S. LUVSANVANDAN, “The Khalkha-Mongolian Phonemic System”, AOH 17 (1964), 176. Cf. N. POPPE, *Khalkha-Mongolische Grammatik, mit Bibliographie, Sprachproben und Glossar*. Wiesbaden 1951, 16-17; Idem, *Buriat Grammar*. Bloomington 1960. (UAS, 2), 8; KW, xi-xii. For the relationship between Written Mongolian and Modern (Spoken) Mongolian cf. S. LUVSANVANDAN, “Mongol bičgiiñ xèl”, *Studia Mongolica* 7 (15), 5 (1979), 48-51.

²⁰ *Ĵobolang* ~ *ĵobalang* is likewise well attested in the early documents. Unlike the word *oytoryui*, *ĵobolang* constantly alternates with *ĵobalang* in Middle and Preclassical Mongolian. Cf. the *Secret History*: *ĵobolang*, but also *ĵoba-* ~ *ĵobo-* ‘to suffer’ (*Wörterbuch*, 91; *SH Index*, 249b); *Hua-i i-yü*: *ĵobolang* (*Matériel*, 67); MA, 477c: *ĵoba-* and *ĵobalang*; ‘Phags-pa: *ĵobo-* (LIGETI, “Les fragments...”, 252a); *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (1312 ed.): *ĵobalang*, *ĵobolang* (CLEAVES, “The *Bodistw-a...*”, 61b, 62a); the inscription in memory of Prince Hindu of 1362: *ĵobalang(-ud)* (F. W. CLEAVES in HJAS 12 (1949), 74b); the Buddhist text of 1431: *ĵobalang* (HEISSIG “Zwei mutmaßlich ...”, 83); the Olon Süme material: *ĵobalang* (HEISSIG, *Die mong. Handschriften-Reste*, 589a). Clearly, from the end of the 14th c. the form *ĵobalang* becomes dominant, and this is the form that we find in the *Altan tobči* (55a *et passim*), the *Erdeni-yin tobči* (*ET Index*, 105a-b), and in Classical and Modern Literary Mongolian. See the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (*Tanjur* ed.), 3a *et passim*; Sumatiratna, I, 1150d-1152a; KOWALEWSKI, 2379b; MKT, 1325c; CÉVÉL, 272a. Cf. Kh. *zovlon*, Bur. *zobolon(g)*, Kalm. *zowlŋ*, Ord. *Džowolonŋ*!

²¹ See, e.g., *Mahāvvyūpatti*, 12, no. 209; Sumatiratna, I, 1180d-f.

²² It is interesting to note that the word *oytaryui* is absent from such important lexicographical works

its way into the literary language and in Mongolian lexicography, but not uniformly so.²³

We may then formulate the development of the word under review in the written language as follows: AM **oytaryu(i)* > PCM *oytoryu(i)* > *oytoryu(i)* ~ *oytaryu(i)* > WM (= CM) *oytaryui* > MLM *oytaryui*, *oytoryui*.

By contrast, the common verb *oytol-*, *oytal-* retained its ambivalence in Written Mongolian in spite of a definite bias in religious literature in favour of the form in *a*, surely because of its wide usage in secular literature.

In the case of *qočor-* versus *qočar-*, we have on the other hand a perfect example where Classical Mongolian usage and secular writings reflecting the spoken languages actually coincided.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that under the pressure of the spoken languages a number of words could escape the straitjacket of Classical Written Mongolian as defined by the Buddhist Canon (i.e. the Mongolian *Kanjur* and *Tanjur*) and, generally, by Mongolian clerical literature, so that they continue to reflect, or at least approach, the reality of the living language. This fact is known. What needs to be reconsidered, in my opinion, is the whole concept of Written Mongolian. As we have demonstrated in the case histories of a few words, any generalization about 'Written Mongolian' as such is misleading, for one must clearly distinguish its preclassical and classical features *on an individual word basis*.

In the first edition (1954) of his *Grammar of Written Mongolian*, POPPE wrote that Written Mongolian is 'the most archaic language and the sole surviving representative of Ancient Mongolian' and that 'Written Mongolian is an Ancient Mongolian language'.²⁴ These statements are clearly no longer valid and POPPE himself, in subsequent editions of the *Grammar*, has tacitly modified them to the effect that Written Mongolian is 'the most archaic Mongolian language which has preserved some features of Ancient Mongolian' and that 'Written Mongolian is close to [the] Ancient Mongolian language'.²⁵

In 1976, POPPE further qualified the above statements as follows: 'Although the Script (or Written) Mongolian language is, in some aspects, close to Ancient Mongolian [i.e. the oldest stage of Mongolian language history lasting approximately until the twelfth century — I.R.], they are not identical. Script Mongolian represents a rather

as the (*Qayan-u bičigsen*) *Manju ügen-ü toli bičig* and the Ch'ing pentaglot, both 18th c. compilations.

²³ Cf. CEVEL, 408a: *oytoryui*, and ŠAŤJA, 111a: *oytaryui*; *Mongyol usüg-i bugüde quriyaysan bičig* (1891), III, 42a: *oytoryui*; and MKT, 200b: *oytaryui*. GOLSTUNSKIĪ, I, 195c, also has *oytaryui*.

²⁴ N. POPPE, *Grammar of Written Mongolian*. Wiesbaden 1954, 1, 2.

²⁵ See *ibid.*, third printing (1974), 1, 2.

advanced stage of development. It originated sometime in the second half of the twelfth century and bears some distinct Middle Mongolian traits.²⁶

As shown by the use of the word 'Script' instead of 'Written', POPPE harboured by this time some reservations about the expression Written Mongolian. Indeed, doubts about the validity of the definition 'Written Mongolian' were already felt several decades ago by the late K. GRØNBECH and by J. R. KRUEGER who consequently devised the expression 'Classical (Literary) Mongolian' for the title of their joint work. But, as KRUEGER points out, this definition refers only to the 'strictly classical language of the great Buddhist translations (mid-17th through 18th century) as well as the later similar literary language in vertical script'.²⁷

The question of terminology cannot be solved, however, without addressing the whole issue of periodization of Mongolian. As is known, the first scholar to approach this problem scientifically was B. YA. VLADIMIRCOV, who in 1921 and 1929 elaborated a scheme based on his own and RAMSTEDT's research.²⁸

VLADIMIRCOV broadly divided the history of the Mongolian written language into the Old and the New Periods. The former comprises the Ancient Period (from an undetermined time to the beginning of the 14th century), and the Middle Period (beginning of the 14th to the second half of the 16th century). Through a transition phase, in which a mixed Uighur-Mongolian script was in use, one enters the New or Classical Period (end of the 16th-beginning of the 17th to the 20th century). All these periods are of course characterized by special phonetic, grammatical and lexical features.

²⁶ N. POPPE, "Ancient Mongolian" in W. HEISSIG, J. R. KRUEGER, F. J. OINAS, E. SCHÜTZ (eds), *Tractata Altaica Denis Sinor Sexagenario Optime de Rebus Altaicis Merito Dedicata*. Wiesbaden 1976, 463.

²⁷ K. GRØNBECH and J. R. KRUEGER, *An Introduction to Classical (Literary) Mongolian*, Second Edition, Revised with a New Supplement. Wiesbaden 1976, IX. With regard to the use of the expression Script Mongolian in place of Written Mongolian, Prof. J. C. Street informed me (in his letter of 9 Sept. 1992) that he had raised this issue with Prof. Poppe. In a letter of 16 June 1964, Prof. Street had asked Poppe the following: "More and more it seems to me that the English terms Literary Mongolian and Written Mongolian are awkward and misleading. Would you have any objection — or do you think others would — if I started a campaign to use the term Script Mongolian for documents of any period that are written in the vertical script?" In his reply of 24 June 1964, Poppe wrote: "As for your questions, I find the term Script Mongolian excellent. As a matter of fact, I used it in my grammar of Written Mongolian, but Professor Cleaves, who helped me in editing it, found that term no good and replaced it automatically with Written Mongolian everywhere." It should also be mentioned that the expression Script Mongolian had been previously used by other Mongolists, such as S. HATTORI, in their works as a direct English rendering of German *Schriftmongolisch* — the term employed by RAMSTEDT in his classical study (see above, n. 12).

²⁸ See B. YA. VLADIMIRCOV, *Mongol'skiĭ sbornik rasskazov iz Pañcatantra*. Petrograd 1921, 41-53; idem, *Sravnitel'naya grammatika*, 20-24, 33, 73-78, 118-120.

Although VLADIMIRCOV introduced a broad, two-fold classification, his periodization is basically three-fold, postulating, as it does, an Ancient, a Middle and a New (or Classical) Period.

The above scheme was adopted by G. D. SANŽEEV²⁹ and served as basis for subsequent attempts at periodization.

In 1954, POPPE redefined VLADIMIRCOV's three periods as the Preclassical, the Classical and the Modern. The first extended from the very beginning to the 17th century; the second lasted until the beginning of the 20th century, but it affected only religious literature, secular literature continuing to be influenced by the dialects. The latest, or Modern period, continues to the present. With regards to the dialects, i.e. to Spoken Mongolian, POPPE also uses a three-fold division: Ancient Mongolian, Middle Mongolian and Modern Mongolian, this last comprising the modern Mongolian colloquial languages.³⁰

A year later, L. LIGETI also expressed some reservations concerning VLADIMIRCOV's periodization, and tentatively proposed a revised scheme with regard to the early and middle periods of the written language. He was the first to name the period before the 13th century, on which we have only hypothetical data, as the Proto-Mongolian Period. His second or Ancient Mongolian Period covers the 13th century; and the third, or Middle Mongolian Period, partly coincides with VLADIMIRCOV's first or Ancient Period.³¹

In an important study which appeared in 1964, LIGETI was able to show that the so-called Preclassical and Middle Mongolian are one and the same language, Preclassical Mongolian being simply Middle Mongolian written in Uighur-Mongolian script.³²

In the same year 1964, in the section devoted to the Mongolian Written Language in the authoritative *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, G. DOERFER put forth a modified version of the three-fold periodization as follows: Preclassical (13th to 17th century), Classical (17th to 20th century) and Modern (20th century), with the Preclassical Period further divided into Early Preclassical (13th and 14th centuries) and Later Preclassical

²⁹ See G. D. SANŽEEV, *Sravnitel'naya grammatika mongol'skikh yazykov*, I. Moscow 1953, 15-16; Idem, *Staropis'mennyi mongol'skiĭ yazyk*. Moscow 1964, 7-11 (cf. G. D. SANZHEYEV, *The Old-Script Mongolian Language and Its Development in Khalkha*. English ed. prepared by J. R. KRUEGER. Bloomington 1988, 11-17); Idem, *Sovremennyi mongol'skiĭ yazyk*. Moscow 1960, 9-10 (cf. G. D. SANZHEYEV, *The Modern Mongolian Language*. Tr. by D. M. SEGAL. Moscow 1973, 16-17).

³⁰ N. POPPE, *Grammar*, 1-4. Cf. the earlier scheme in his *Grammatika pis'menno-mongol'skogo yazyka*. Moscow 1937, 13-16.

³¹ L. LIGETI, Review of G. D. SANŽEEV's *Sravnitel'naya grammatika mongol'skikh yazykov*, I, in *Voprosy yazykoznaniiya* 1955: 5, 136.

³² LIGETI, "Les fragments...", 291-292.

(17th century), leaving out of consideration the 15th and 16th centuries for lack of sufficient literary records.³³

The section on Middle Mongolian in the *Handbuch* was contributed by POPPE who, unaware of LIGETI's discovery concerning Preclassical and Middle Mongolian, reaffirmed that the latter was the 'colloquial language' (*Umgangssprache*) of the Mongols from the beginning of the 13th until the end of the 16th century, while Preclassical Written Mongolian served as the written language in the same period.³⁴ Finally, in 1975, POPPE expressed himself as follows with regard to 'Script (or Written) Mongolian' (Mo.): 'The history of Mo. can be divided into three main periods: 1. Pre-Classical Mongolian (XIII-XVI centuries); 2. Classical Mongolian (XVII century and thereafter), and 3. Post-Classical Mongolian which is the language of secular literature often mixed with colloquial elements. Post-Classical is not a good term because this kind of language existed, for a considerable length of time, side by side with Classical Mongolian. One of its oldest specimens is the well-known Geser Khan epic which appeared in a xylographic edition in 1716 but had been compiled or translated from Tibetan before that. The so-called Post-Classical Mongolian language became rather different from Classical Mongolian at the beginning of the current century when Mo. became the language of the press and modern literature to a large extent translated from European languages. Modern or New Script Mongolian would be a better term than Post-Classical'.³⁵

In the following two decades, Mongolian and Russian scholars produced periodization schemes which, in the main, are also variations on VLADIMIROV's and LIGETI's schemes but which must not be ignored.

According to A. LUVSANDĒNDĒV (1972), the first or Ancient Period of the written language lasted until the beginning of the 13th century; and the second or Middle Period, until the beginning of the 17th century, being in turn divided into two stages: one lasting from the beginning of the 13th century to the beginning of the 14th century, and the other from the beginning of the 14th until the middle of the 17th century. His third period began in the middle of the 17th century and lasts to this day. It is also divided into two stages: the first from the middle of the 17th century to the 1940s, the second from then on.³⁶

³³ DOERFER, "Mongolistik", in B. SPULER (ed.), *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, I Abt., V Band, II Abschnitt. Leiden-Köln 1964, 81-83. DOERFER's valuable contribution to the periodization issue lies chiefly in his exposition of the 'archaizing' traditional trend and the 'modernizing' progressive trend in the written documents of the various periods — a topic deserving fuller treatment.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 96. Cf. also N. POPPE, *Introduction to Altaic Linguistics*. Wiesbaden 1965, 21.

³⁵ N. POPPE, "Altaic Linguistics — An Overview". SL 6 (Dec. 1975), 152.

³⁶ A. LUVSANDĒNDĒV, "K voprosu o periodizacii mongol'skogo literaturnogo yazyka", XZS, 11, 1-

Subsequently (1977), LUVSANDĒNĒV modified his earlier scheme to the effect that the first or Ancient Period lasted from an undetermined time in the past till the 5th century A.D. Accordingly, the first stage of his second or Middle Period lasted from the 5th to the beginning of the 14th century.³⁷

For D. TÖMÖRTOGOO (1972/1992), on the other hand, there are four periods: the Proto-Mongolian Period, largely conjectural; the Ancient Mongolian Period, from the end of the Proto-Mongolian Period to the 11th-12th centuries; the Middle Mongolian Period, from the 11th-12th centuries to the 16th-17th centuries; and the Modern Mongolian Period, from the 16th-17th centuries onward.³⁸

Last but not least comes M. N. ORLOVSKAYA, who has given us a periodization which is likewise four-fold, but differently dated: the Ancient Period, lasting until the beginning of the 14th century and possibly including the Proto-Mongolian Kitan language (10th-12th century); the Middle Mongolian Period, from the beginning of the 14th to the end of the 16th century; the Classical Mongolian Period, from the end of the 16th-beginning of the 17th century to the beginning of the 20th century; and the Modern Mongolian Period, from the beginning of the 20th century onward.³⁹

All these efforts at periodizing the Mongolian written language have been worthwhile and have no doubt advanced our knowledge. They have also created a certain confusion. To clear the air a little, I think that we should also dispose of the rather discredited expression 'Written Mongolian' and speak only of Literary

21 (1972), 19-21.

³⁷ A. LUVSANDĒNĒV, "Formirovanie mongol'skogo nacional'nogo literaturnogo yazyka", *Olon ulyyn mongolč irdemtnii III Ix xural*. II. Ulan Bator 1977, 9-14 (see, in particular, p. 11).

³⁸ D. TÖMÖRTOGOO, "Mongol xelnii tüüxiig angilax tuxai asuudald", *XZS*, 11, 1-21 (1972), 47-57. A refinement of the scheme proposed in 1972 is found in Professor TÖMÖRTOGOO's recent work *Mongol xelnii tüüxén xélzün ündés. Mongol xelnii tüüxén avia züi*. I. Ulan Bator 1992, 3-34. In dealing with the historical development of the Mongolian written language, TÖMÖRTOGOO retains the designations of Preclassical Written Mongolian (Precl.: 13th-14th/15th c.) and Classical Written Mongolian (Mo.: 16th-17th/18th c.), see *ibid.* 37-46 and 46-51. However, I find that the inclusion of Ancient Mongolian (AM), i.e. the 'written' or literary language of the 13th-14th c., between Proto-Mongolian (PM) and Middle Mongolian (MM) creates serious, if not unsurmountable, problems, since TÖMÖRTOGOO's AM coincides, in reality, with his Precl. which, in turn (as shown by LIGETI), is merely the written counterpart of MM. For TÖMÖRTOGOO's treatment of the words *oytaryui*, *oytol-* (TÖ.: *oytul-*) and *jobalang* see pp. 183c and 182b (Index). See, in particular, the scheme on p. 73 (where *jobalan* in columns 4, 5 & 6 is a misprint for *jobalang*). As can be seen from this scheme, the author fails to take into account AM (= Precl.) *oytoryu(i)* and MLM *oytaryui*.

³⁹ See M. N. ORLOVSKAYA, *Yazyk "Altan tobči"*. Moscow 1984, 9-12; cf. also her article "O periodizacii istorii razvitiya mongol'skogo pis'mennogo literaturnogo yazyka", in A. N. KONONOV et al. (eds), *Mongolica. Pamyati akademika Borisa Yakovleviča Vladimircova 1884-1931*. Moscow 1986, 83-86. Professor Orlovskaya is at present completing a major work on the grammar of Old Mongolian (pers. comm.). Her research will no doubt be of enormous help towards the redefinition of linguistic boundaries.

Mongolian of a certain period, viz. Old (Literary) Mongolian, Middle (Literary) Mongolian and Modern (Literary) Mongolian. We should dispose also of the expression 'Middle Mongolian' inasmuch as it is still incorrectly applied today to Spoken Mongolian of the 13th to 16th centuries, bearing in mind LIGETI's pertinent remarks on the subject. The history of Spoken Mongolian must, therefore, be thoroughly re-examined.

It goes without saying that we must reconsider in detail the phonetic, morphological, syntactical and lexical characteristics of Old, Middle, Modern (and Contemporary) Mongolian in order to refine this scheme by means of further subclassifications both temporal and formal. For instance, where does the language of Sayang Sečen's *Erdeni-yin tobči* belong? Where to fit *Geser Khan* and the Mongolian *Lao Ch'i-ta*?

Eventually, Mongolists from around the world will have to get together at an international forum to discuss this important issue and, by pooling their knowledge, agree on a more rigorous and uniform periodization for Mongolian as it has been done for most other languages.

ABBREVIATIONS

1. Languages

AM	Ancient Mongolian
Bur.	Buriat, after K. M. ČEREMISOV, <i>Buryatsko-russkii slovar'</i> . Moscow 1973
CM	Classical (Written) Mongolian
Kalm.	Kalmuck, after KW
Kh.	Khalkha, after CÈVÈL
MLM	Modern Literary Mongolian
MM	Middle Mongolian
Ord.	Ordos, after A. MOSTAERT, <i>Dictionnaire ordos</i> . Peking 1941-44
PCM	Preclassical Mongolian
WM	Written Mongolian

2. Books, Journals & Series

AF	Asiatische Forschungen
AOH	<i>Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i>
CÈVÈL	YA. CÈVÈL, <i>Mongol xèlniï tovč taïlbar tol'</i> . Ulan Bator 1966
<i>ET Index</i>	I. DE RACHEWILTZ and J. R. KRUEGER, <i>Sayang Secen, Erdeni-yin tobci ('Precious Summary'), A Mongolian Chronicle of 1662. II.: Word-Index to the Urga Text</i> . Canberra 1991

- GOLSTUNSKIĪ K. F. GOLSTUNSKIĪ, *Mongol'sko-russkiĭ slovar'*. I-III + *Dopoln.*, St. Petersburg 1893-1901
- HJAS *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*
- JA *Journal Asiatique*
- KOWALEWSKI J. E. KOWALEWSKI, *Dictionnaire mongol-russe-français*. I-III. Kazan 1844-49; several reprints
- KW G. J. RAMSTEDT, *Kalmückisches Wörterbuch*. Helsinki 1935
- MA N. POPPE, *Mongol'skiĭ slovar' Mukaddimat al-Adab*. I-III. Moscow-Leningrad 1938-39; repr. by Gregg Int. 1971
- Mahāvvyutpatti* Y. ISHIHAMA and Y. FUKUDA, *A New Critical Edition of the Mahāvvyutpatti Sanskrit-Tibetan-Mongolian Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*. The Toyo Bunko. Tokyo 1989
- Matériel* A. MOSTAERT, *Le matériel mongol du Houa i i iu de Houng-ou (1389)*. Bruxelles 1977. (Mél. chinois et bouddhiques, 18)
- MKT *Mongyol kitad toli. Meng-Han tz'u-tien*. Kökeqota (Huhehot) 1976
- SH Index* I. DE RACHEWILTZ, *Index to the Secret History of the Mongols*. Bloomington 1972. (UAS, 121)
- SL *Sciences of Language* (Tokyo)
- Sumatiratna Sumatiratna, *Bod-hor-kyi-brda-yig-min-chigl-don-gsum-dsai-bar-byed-pa-mun-sel-skron-me. Töbed mongyol-un dokiyan-u bičig* [comp. 1877]. I-II. Ulan Bator 1959. (Corpus Script. Mong., VI, VII)
- ŠAĖJA S. ŠAĖJA, *Mongyol üsüg-ün dürim-ün toli bičig*. Ulan Bator 1937
- UAS Uralic and Altaic Series
- Wörterbuch* E. HAENISCH, *Wörterbuch zu Manghol un Niuca Tobca'an (Yüan-ch'ao pi-shi), Geheime Geschichte der Mongolen*. Leipzig 1939; repr. Wiesbaden 1962
- XZS *Xël Zoxiol Sudlal (= Studia Linguae et Litterarum Inst. Linguae et Litt. Acad. Scient. Reipubl. Pop. Mong.)*
- ZAS *Zentralasiatische Studien*