

BIBLIOTHECA ORIENTALIS HUNGARICA

XIV

MONGOLIAN STUDIES

EDITED BY

LOUIS LIGETI



AKADÉMIAI KIADÓ, BUDAPEST 1970

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AN OYIROD LETTER IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

BY

JOSEPH FLETCHER (Cambridge, Mass.)

When Sir Aurel Stein and his Central Asian expedition visited the delta region of the Etsin Gol¹ in 1914, they acquired a letter written in the Oyiroid language, composed presumably by one of the «Old» Torghud² of Etsin Gol. Stein has reproduced the letter under the catalogue number E. G. 021.f, in Volume III of his *Innermost Asia*,³ Plate CXXVI («Paper Documents in Uighur and Mongol from Khara-Khoto, Etsin-Gol and Turfan Sites»), and in Volume II, page 1049, the letter is described: «Letter MS. Western

¹ The name «Etsin» in Etsin Gol (Etsin River) seems to be derived ultimately from a Hsi-Hsia 西夏 (Tangut) word. See P. Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, 2 vols. (Paris, Adrien-Maisonneuve 1959—1963), Vol. 2, pp. 637—638. In the Sino-Mongolian inscription of 1362, the Mongolian form of the word is *Isin-a* — see F. W. Cleaves, *The Sino-Mongolian Inscription of 1362 in Memory of Prince Hindu: Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 12. Nos. 1 and 2 (June, 1949), p. 66, [37], also p. 55, n. 154. In the Ch'ing period, the form *Ejinei* appears to be standard — see, e.g., W. Fuchs, *Der Jesuiten-Atlas der Kanghsi-Zeit*, 2 vols. (*Monumenta Serica Monograph Series*, IV; Peking, Fu-ien University 1943), p. 149; *Ch'in-ting Hsi-yü t'ung-wen chih* 欽定西域同文志, 4 vols. (*Tōyō bunko sōkan* 東洋文庫叢刊, Vol. 16; Tokyo, Tōyō bunko 1961—1964), Vol. 2, p. 962; and P. Pelliot, *Notes critiques d'histoire kalmouke*, 2 vols. (*Oeuvres posthumes de Paul Pelliot* VI; Paris, Adrien-Maisonneuve 1960), Vol. 1, p. 26.

² The Old Torghud (*Xuu'ün Torγuud*) are those whose leaders were descended from Xō Örlöq, the prince who led the Torghud emigration to the Volga in the early seventeenth century. The majority of these returned to Zungharia with Ubaši Xān in 1771. The Old Torghud of Etsin Gol come from a group of Xō Örlöq's descendants who found their return from Tibet to the Volga blocked by the Zunghars in the early eighteenth century and therefore asked to be incorporated into the Ch'ing empire. The Ch'ing government then settled them in the Etsin Gol region. In other words, they were not among those who returned to Zungharia with Ubaši Xān. The New Torghud are those whose leaders were descended from Ejinei Tayiši. They remained in Zungharia until after the Ch'ing conquest of 1755, and then «fearing punishment they fled to the Volga» under the leadership of Šereng. In 1771 they returned to Zungharia with Ubaši Xān. See *Hsi-ch'ui tsung-t'ung shih-lüeh* 西陲總統事畧 (preface 1809), 11 : 1r—4v (2v9 for the phrase quoted), and Pelliot, *Notes critiques*, Vol. 1, pp. 25—26, 28, 34; and Vol. 2 (*Tableaux généalogiques*), Tableau III: *Généalogie des Turghut*.

³ Sir Aurel Stein, K.C.I.E., *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-su and Eastern Īrān*, 4 vols. (Oxford, Clarendon Press 1928).

Mongol (Qalmaq) text. 6 ll. complete, beautifully written on soft white paper. 20.7 × 26 cm. Folded into a slip 3.7 cm. broad.» The letter is now preserved in the British Museum.

Written Oyirod has received little attention in Mongolian studies. A brief introduction to the study of the language can be found in T. A. Bertagaev, *Kalmyckiĭ yazyk in Mladopis'mennye yazyki narodov SSSR* (Akademiya nauk SSR, Institut yazykoznaniiya; Moscow and Leningrad, Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR 1959), pages 497–501; P. Aalto, *Schrift-Oiratisch in Mongolistik (Handbuch der Orientalistik, Erste Abteilung, Fünfter Band, Zweiter Abschnitt; Leiden and Köln, E. J. Brill 1964)*, pages 185–199; and B. Ch. Todaeva, *Kalmyckiĭ yazyk in Yazyki narodov SSSR, Vol. 5: Mongol'skie, tunguso-man'čžurskie i paleoaziatskie yazyki* (Leningrad, Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1968, pages 34–52.) In the United States A. Borman-shinov and G. Zagadinov are working on *A Bibliographical Guide to Kalmyk Studies*, and a considerable amount of material is now being published in Elista, capital of the Kalmuk ASSR in the Soviet Union, but little has been done anywhere in the world in the way of published texts and translations.

Notable as works dealing specifically with written Oyirod texts are the following: B. Jülg, ed. and tr., *Märchen des Siddhi-kür* (Leipzig, F. A. Brockhaus 1866);⁴ K. Th. Golstunskiĭ, ed. and tr., *Mongolo-oĭratskie zakony 1640 goda, dopolnitel'nye ukazy Galdan-xun-taidžiya i zakony, sostavlennyye dlya volžskix kalmykov pri kalmyckom xaně Donduk-Daši* (Saint Petersburg, Tipografiya Imperatorskoĭ Akademii nauk 1880);⁵ A. M. Pozdneev, comp., *Kalmyckiya narodnyya skazki* (Saint Petersburg, Litografiya A. Ikonnikova 1886), *Kalmyckiya narodnyya skazki sobrannyya v Kalmykix stepyax Astraxanskoĭ gubernii i v podlinnom kalmyckom tekstě*, Vol. I (Saint Petersburg, Tipografiya Imperatorskoĭ Akademii nauk 1892), and *Kalmyckaya xrestomatiya dlya čteniya v staršix klassax kalmykix narodnyx škol* (Saint Petersburg, Tipografiya Imperatorskoĭ Akademii nauk 1892);⁶ W. Kotwicz, *Kalmyckiya zagadki i posloviy (Izdaniya*

⁴ For a bibliography of translations from the *Siditü kegür*, see B. Ya. Vladimircov's translation, *Volšebnyĭ mertvec: Mongol'sko-oĭratskie skazki* (Moscow, Izdatel'stvo vostočnoĭ literatury 1958), pp. 151–153, and also L. Lőrincz, *Les «Contes du Cadavre Ensorcelé» dans la littérature et le folklore mongols* (cited below in full in the present paper), pp. 213–215. Note also Golstunskiĭ's edition of the text cited in note 5 below.

⁵ Golstunskiĭ also published *Ubaši Xun-taidžin taidži, narodnaya Kalmyckaya poëma Džangara i Siditü kyurjün-tüli* (St. Petersburg, Litografiya A. Ikonnikova 1864), to which I have not had access.

⁶ These are the only Oyirod texts published by Pozdneev which I have been able to examine personally. His other Oyirod publications include *Pamyatniki istoričeskoĭ*

Fakulteta vostočnyx yazykov Imperatorskago S.-Peterburgskago universiteta, No. 16; Saint Petersburg, Tipografiya Imperatorskoĭ akademii nauk 1905); E. Haenisch, *Kalmükische Fragmente: Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher*, Vol. 25 (1953), Nos. 3 and 4, pages 283–294, and *Kapitel XVII von Jalavāhana aus dem kalmükischen Text des Altan Gerel in Asiatica: Festschrift Friedrich Weller* (Leipzig, Otto Harrassowitz 1954), pages 198–213;⁷ G. Kara, *Le colophon de l'Altan gerel oirat: Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Vol. 10 (1960), No. 3, pages 255–261; Rinčyēn and Čimid, eds., *Version oirate des chansons de Guesser: Tod üsgün Geser (Corpus scriptorum Mongolorum Instituti linguae et litterarum Comitēti scientiarum et educationis Altae Reipublicae Populi Mongol[ic]i, Tomus IX, Fasc. 1; Ulan Bator, Šinžlex Uxaan, Deed Bolovsrolyn Xürelengün xevlel 1960)* and Rinčyēn and Ž. Cołoo, eds., *Biography of Caya Pandita in Oirat Characters (Corpus scriptorum Mongolorum, Tomus V, Fasc. 2–3; Ulan Bator, Šinžlex Uxaany Akadyemiin xevlel 1967)*;⁸ N. Poppe, *An Oyrat Vajracchedikā Fragment*

literatury Astraxanskix kalmykov (St. Petersburg 1885); *Kalmyckiya skazki: Zapiski vostočnago otdeleniya Imperatorskago russkago arxeologičeskago obščestva*, Vol. 3 (1888), pp. 307–364, Vol. 4 (1889), pp. 321–374, Vol. 6 (1891), pp. 1–68, Vol. 7 (1892), pp. 1–38, Vol. 9 (1895), pp. 1–58, Vol. 10 (1896), pp. 139–185; *Skazanie o xoždenii v Tibetskuyu stranu Malo-Dörbötskago Bāza-Bakši* (St. Petersburg 1897); *Kalmyckaya xrestomatiya* (St. Petersburg 1907 — a second edition of his *Kalmyckaya xrestomatiya* of 1892). How many of the above actually contain texts in the written Oyirod language I have been unable to ascertain, but Pozdneev's *Pamyatniki istoričeskoĭ literatury Astraxanskix kalmykov* and his *Kalmyckaya xrestomatiya* contain the Oyirod text of the so-called *Skazanie o dərbēn oĭratax* of Bātur Ubaši Tümen, for which see L. S. Pučkovskiĭ, *Mongol'skie, buryat-mongol'skie i oĭratskie rukopisi i ksilografiy Instituta vostočnovedeniya, I: Istoriya, pravo* (Moscow and Leningrad, Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR 1957), pp. 142–144. According to I. Ya. Zlatkin, *Istoriya Džungarskogo xanstva (1635–1758)* (Moscow, Izdatel'stvo «Nauka» 1964), p. 13, the *Skazanie . . .* of Bātur Ubaši Tümen has been translated into Russian by Yu. Lytkin in *Astraxanskije gubernskie vedomosti*, 1859, Nos. 43, 47, 49, 50; 1860, Nos. 11, 12.

⁷ Also E. Haenisch, ed., *Altan Gerel: Die westmongolische Fassung des Goldglanzsutra nach einer Handschrift der Kgl. Bibliothek zu Kopenhagen*, T. 1: Text (Leipzig, Asia Major 1929), to which I have not had access.

⁸ Notwithstanding its title, this volume contains the *Savayin gerel* of Radnabhadra (the biography referred to in the title), the history of Fabang Šes rab (here entitled *Dörbön Oyirodiyin töuke*), and a letter of Dawā ėi Xān. Furthermore, although it is designated as Tomus V, Fasc. 2–3, of the *Corpus scriptorum Mongolorum* series, it is not to be confused with Radnabhadra, *Rabjamba Cay-a Bandida-yin tuyuji: Saran-u gerel kemegdekü ene metü bolai*, ed. Rinčyēn (*Corpus scriptorum Mongolorum, Tomus V, Fasc. 2*; Ulan Bator, Erdem šinžilgeeni xevlel 1959), which also contains the *Olon nomin ündüsün üzügün iljal orošiboi*. It appears that the Soviet scholar T. A.

from *Turfan: Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (September, 1962), pages 170—178; L. Lőrincz, *Fragments d'une version oirate du Cadavre Ensorcelé: Acta Orientalia*, Vol. 17 (1964), No. 3, pages 293—321, and *Les «Contes du Cadavre Ensorcelé» dans la littérature et le folklore mongols: Acta Orientalia*, Vol. 20 (1967), No. 2, pages 203—238; and J. R. Krueger, *Remarks on the Oirat Vajracchedikā in Vienna in Kalmyk-Oirat Symposium*, ed. A. Borman-shinov and J. R. Krueger (*Kalmyk Monograph Series*, Number Two; Philadelphia, The Society for the Promotion of Kalmyk Culture 1966), pages 223—227, and *The Arthasiddhi Avadāna-Tale in Oirat-Mongolian: The Mongolia Society Bulletin*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Spring, 1967), pages 29—33. This short list is by no means complete,⁹ but it will serve to give some idea of the state of our studies on the Oyiroid written language.

Since no one, to my knowledge, has yet published a specimen of Oyiroid private correspondence, I have undertaken to translate Stein's Oyiroid letter in the British Museum. The transcription system employed is that used by N. N. Poppe in his *Geserica: Untersuchung der sprachlichen Eigentümlichkeiten der mongolischen Version des Gesserkhan: Asia Major*, Vol. 3 (1926), Fasc. 1, pages 1—32, and Fasc. 2, pages 167—193, and elaborated more explicitly in his *Ob otnošenii oïratskoï pis'mennosti k kalmyckomu yazyku in Kalmyk-Oirat Symposium*, pages 191—210.¹⁰ I should like to express

Burdukova has made a draft translation of Gabang Šes rab's history, and it is to be hoped that this translation will soon appear in print — see Zlatkin, *Istoriya Džungarskogo xanstva*, p. 13, n. 21.

⁹ In the body of this paper I have listed only those works that I have been able to consult myself. Works that I have not seen but that have been cited in the literature at my disposal are mentioned in notes 5—7 above. There must be many omissions. P. Aalto, for example, on p. 188 of his article *Schrift-Oiratisch* cited above, mentions a Kalmuk chrestomathy by Choncho (Xonxo?) published in 1926 that I have not yet been able to trace.

¹⁰ Mr. Poppe writes *č* before *i* but *c* before all other vowels and writes *ǰ* before *i* but *z* before all other vowels. This may at first glance seem unnecessary, since these are simply consistent pronunciation shifts before *i*, like the shift in pronunciation of *s* to *š* before *i* in written Mongolian (where we transcribe *si*, not *ši*, except when *š* is designated by two dots written to the right of the letter). But the Oyiroid «clear script» (*todo bičiq, todo üzüq, todo Mongγol bičiq*) has, over the course of time, demonstrated a tendency to distinguish between *c* and *č*, *z* and *ǰ*. In his letter to me of July 20, 1959, Mr. Poppe reasons as follows: «... in some manuscripts the initial *č* (before *i*) is written as **Д**, whereas *c* (before other vowels) is rendered with another letter, namely **У**. Likewise, *ǰ* before *i* is often written as **Д**, but before other vowels it is **У**. Thus, there is definitely a tendency to distinguish between *c* and *č*, between *ǰ* and *z*. There-

my thanks to Mr. Poppe for answering a number of my questions about written Oyiroid, with special reference to the present Oyiroid letter, in a letter of July 20, 1959. I also take this opportunity to thank Father A. Mostaert for discussing the Oyiroid letter with me in the same year. All mistakes are of course my own.

The letter is not old and probably dates from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century (prior to 1914). It reads as follows:

Transcription

1. §: *Günggeceren-ni bičiq*
2. *blama-du bariulyaba. mini keregtei sayin geqsen xoyor*
3. *moriyimini. xalzuu čino zuwǰi. öün-dü em dom*
4. *xayirlaxuyigi medöulenei. xayirlaǰi angxarbala. ene*
5. *örtöni bičiq zökü kümür xayirlaǰi ilgeküyigi*
6. *medöulenei. ene učir örgübö.*

Translation

§: Letter of Günggeceren¹¹

To [you,] Lama, [I] have had [my messenger] present [this letter]. A rabid wolf has bitten¹² two of my horses which I consider [both] necessary and

fore, in my articles I write *zaxa* «edge» but *ǰil* «year», *čiloun* «stones» but *cayān* «white». Your remark that such a method would substitute a phonological transcription for transliteration is justified. It would, but what do we do in Written Mongolian? Do we not write *olan* «many» but *ulus* «people», *öngge* «color» but *ünür* «smell», *tala* «plain» but *dalu* «scapula»? We do, although in Mongolian *writing* there is no distinction between *o* and *u*, *ö* and *ü*, *t* and *d*, etc. Therefore, in my opinion, nothing remains but to distinguish between *c* and *č*, *z* and *ǰ*.

The *c* ~ *č* and *z* ~ *ǰ* alternations are not exactly analogous to the alternations *o* ~ *u*, *ö* ~ *ü*, and *t* ~ *d*, but there are two good reasons for using the Poppe system. First is the reason that Mr. Poppe gives: the Oyiroid themselves have a tendency to distinguish between *č* before *i* and *c* before other vowels and between *ǰ* before *i* and *z* before other vowels. Second, and perhaps more important, is the desirability of having a standard system of transcription for written Oyiroid. The Poppe system already has some currency, and it is in line with the standard system for transcribing written Mongolian. It seems reasonable therefore to perpetuate its use.

¹¹ The name of the writer of the letter, *Günggeceren*, is composed of two elements: *güngge* (< Tibetan *kun-dga*, «great merriment») and *ceren* (< Tibetan *che-rin*, «long life»).

¹² In *zuwǰi*, the ending *-ǰi* is the praeteritum imperfecti, a finite verb ending (< *-ǰu'ui* < *-ǰuyui*). Cf. written Mongolian *-ǰuqui*, which is based on an early misreading

good. Therefore I beg you to grant [me some] medicine.¹³ If [you] are willing to grant [it],¹⁴ I beg you to be so kind as to send¹⁵ [it to me] by this postal messenger.¹⁶ [On] this account [I] have presented [my letter].

of *-juγui*. According to G. J. Ramstedt, *Kalmückisches Wörterbuch (Lexica Societatis Fenno-Ugricae, III; Helsinki, Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seura 1935)*, p. XVIII, this form rarely serves as the predicate of a sentence («Selten als Prädikat des Satzes»). Poppe, *Geserica*, p. 172, appears to confirm Ramstedt's observation: «Im Gesserkhan finden wir das Praeteritum imperfecti nur mehreremal.»

¹³ An honorific expression, literally, «In [respect of] this, [I] cause [you] to know [the fact of] granting [me] medicine [and magic] cure.» The phrase *γayirlašuyigi* (< *γayirlaš-* + *-xu* [nomen futuri] + *-yigi* [accusativus]) *medöülenei* (< *mede-* + *-ül-* [causativus] + *-e* [union vowel] + *-nei* [praesens imperfecti]) is an normal formula for making a request. Compare note 15 below.

The basic meaning of *γayirlaš-* (~ *γayirlaš-*) is «to love,» but the acquired meaning, «to grant,» with a direct object, is well attested in the dictionaries. J. E. Kowalewski, *Dictionnaire mongol-russe-français*, 3 vols. (Kazan, Imprimerie de l'Université, 1844—1849), Vol. 2, p. 714a, gives *sün kiged bal üčüken qayirala* («donne moi un peu de lait et de miel»). A. Pozdneev, *Kalmycko-russkii slovar'* (St. Petersburg, Tipografiya Imperatorskoj Akademii nauk 1911), p. 74, gives *Dalai bLamayin Gegen Ayuuki-du χān colo γayiralaŋi* («Dalai lama požaloval Ayuke titul xana»). Ramstedt, *Kalmückisches Wörterbuch*, p. 180b, gives *jū γārlwā* («was gab er?»). A. Mostaert, *Dictionnaire ordos*, 2nd ed. (New York and London, Johnson Reprint Corporation 1968), p. 346b, gives *t'enŋer sonū borōd γārladži wān* («de ciel nous donne une bonne pluie»).

¹⁴ An honorific expression, literally, «If, granting, [you] attend [to my request].»

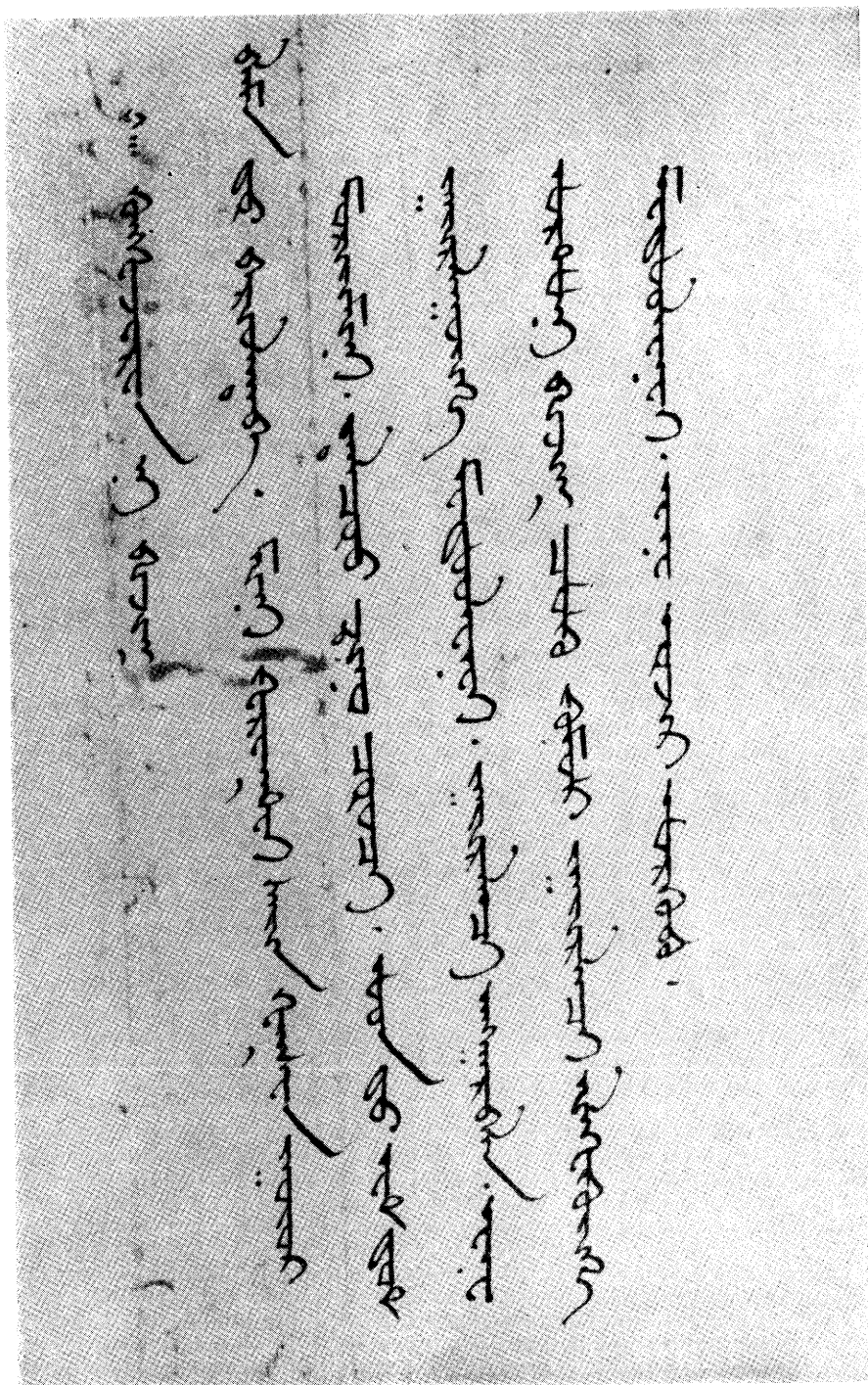
¹⁵ An honorific expression similar to the one discussed in note 13 above, literally, «[I] cause [you] to know [the fact of] granting [very literally, «lovingly»] and sending [to me].»

¹⁶ Literally, «by this letter-carrying man of the post station.» In *kümūr* we have an instrumental form of *kümü(n)*, in which the final *-n* is dropped and the instrumental case is formed by lengthening the final vowel and adding *-r*. See Poppe, *Geserica*, p. 23: «Im Gesserkhan finden sich die gewöhnlichen Suffixe *-ber*, *-iyer* und auch *-Vr* (langer Vokal + *r*), welches einem mundartlichen Einfluß zuzuschreiben ist.» In earlier texts we would expect to find *kümēr* (see, e.g., Pozdneev, *Kalmyckaya xrestomatiya* [1892], p. 34, line 5, and Rinčyēn and Coloo, eds., *Biography of Caya Pandita*, p. 98, line 10). Historically, the instrumentalis in *-Vr* would seem to be derived ultimately from *-γar/-ger*. Thus, **kümü + ger > *kümü'er > kümūr* (~ *kümēr*).

For the form *kümü* without the final *-n* attested in written Mongolian, see F. W. Cleaves, *The Sino-Mongolian Inscription of 1338 in Memory of Jigün-tei: Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 14, Nos. 1 and 2 (June, 1951), p. 53, [4], and p. 76, n. 26: «The form *kümü* «man» without the final *-n* is extremely rare.» Notwithstanding its rarity in written Mongolian, *kümü* seems to be relatively common in written Oйrod. The form *kümü* is attested, for example, in Golstunskii, ed. and tr., *Mongolo-ōratskie zakony 1640 goda*, p. 3, lines 4 and 11; p. 4, lines 1, 2, 3 and 4; p. 10, lines 7 and 10; p. 26, line 2; and p. 30, line 10; and in Pozdneev, *Kalmyckaya xrestomatiya* (1892), p. 21, line 10.

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E.G. 021. f.

ZWEI MONGOLISCHE TEXTFRAGMENTE AUS ZENTRALASIEN

VON

HERBERT FRANKE (München)

Die beiden mittelalterlichen Texte, die hier behandelt werden sollen, kann ich nur mit allem Vorbehalt den Fachgenossen vorlegen. Der eine ist zwar ganz erhalten, jedoch flüchtig geschrieben und an manchen entscheidenden Stellen so unleserlich geworden, daß ich an mehreren Stellen eher auf Vermutungen als eine gesicherte Lesung angewiesen war. Der andere ist ein Textfragment, das zwar dort, wo der Text erhalten blieb, der Lesung keine Schwierigkeiten bereitet, dafür aber so lückenhaft ist, daß keine einwandfreie zusammenhängende Deutung möglich war. Da aber jedes noch so geringfügig erscheinende Dokument des älteren Mongolisch für die weitere Forschung von Wert ist, wage ich es, meine Entzifferungsversuche zu veröffentlichen, nicht zuletzt auch in der Hoffnung, daß andere Forscher sich mit mehr Erfolg an diesen beiden Texten versuchen möchten als es mir möglich war.

I. Eine militärische Bestandsmeldung aus der Sammlung Yurinkan (Kyoto)

Es handelt sich um das Dokument Nr. 4 der «roten» Serie in der Sammlung zentralasiatischer Manuskripte des Museums Yurinkan in Kyoto. Bereits 1963 erhielt ich durch Walther Heissig ein Photo des Dokuments und hatte 1965 Gelegenheit, durch die freundliche Vermittlung von Professor Fujieda Akira (Kyoto) das Dokument in Augenschein zu nehmen. Dem Direktor der Sammlung, Herrn Fujii Shuichi sei hier dafür gedankt, daß er die Genehmigung zur Veröffentlichung gab (vgl. auch *Asia Major*, N. S. XI, 2 (1965) S. 120 Anm. 1 und S. 127 a. E.).

Das Dokument ist auf ziemlich dunklem grauen, sehr zerknitterten Papier geschrieben, anscheinend mit einer Schreibfeder und nicht mit Pinsel. Die vielen Runzeln und Falten des Papiers machen auch das Original sehr schwer leserlich; zudem ist an einigen Stellen die Tinte stark verblaßt und an anderen sind durch Löcher im Papier ganze Buchstabengruppen fortgefallen. Das Dokument umfaßt sieben Zeilen, deren versuchsweise Lesung lauten könnte: