

PASSAGES IN THE *SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS*

I

LAJOS BESE

The text of the *Secret History of the Mongols* has indeed been translated and interpreted by the best scholars of Mongolian studies. As a result of their efforts, the text of the *SH* is now easily accessible to readers apart from some, even though not too many, passages. Considering the obstacles hindering the interpretation of this splendid 13th century text, this is undoubtedly a great achievement. The endeavours of the translators and interpreters must by all means be acknowledged. It is, however, absurd to believe that even in theory all the exegetical problems of the *SH* have been settled. This is why the present author may feel justified in believing that his comments to be published continuously under the above title will prove to be of use in unveiling the so-far hidden details and the mistranslated or misinterpreted passages in the *SH*.

1. On the translation of the serial coordinate nominals in the *SH*.

The question of how to translate the serial coordinate nominals in the *SH* is discussed here, with special attention to the serial coordinate personal names. A relevant simple grammatical rule of the Mongolian language is as follows: "The most usual conjunction is a numeral indicating the total of the objects concerned and occupying the place after the last word of such a group. The numeral can take any grammatical ending." (Cf. Poppe 1954, 121.) "When all members of [...] a serial coordinate nominal have single, definite referents (usually living beings, less commonly inanimate objects), the nominal is regularly followed by a modifying numeral [...] that numbers the serial members; the numeral is to be translated simply as 'and'. Note that no commas are used in such sequences." (Cf. Street 1963, 181, and Street 1957, 32 respectively.)

Now, how is this simple grammatical rule applied by the translators of the *SH*? Let me illustrate it with a few examples. (Italics for emphasis by me, L. B.)

(1) §49 *Qutuγtu Yürki-yin köbegüd Seče beki Tayiču qoyar bülege.*

Haenisch 1948, 7: 'Chutuchtu yürkis Söhne waren *die Beiden* Setsche beki *und* Taitshu.'

Kozin 1941, 84: 'U Khutukhtu-Jurki bylo *dva* syna: Seče-beki *i* Taiču.'

Pelliot 1949, 128: 'Qutuqtu-yürki eut *deux* fils, Säčä-bäki *et* Taiču; ...'

Ligeti 1962, 14: 'Kutuktu-jürki fia Szece-se-beki *és* Tajcsu volt; ...'

['The sons of Qutuqtu-yürki were Seče-beki *and* Taiču; ...']

de Rachewiltz 1971, 126: 'Qutuqtu-yürki's *two* sons were Seče-beki *and* Taiču.'

Cleaves 1982, 10: 'The sons of Qutuqtu Yürki were *the twain*, Seče Beki *and* Taiču.'

Bese: 'The sons of Qutuqtu Yürki were Seče Beki *and* Taiču.'

(2) §45 *Menen Tudun-nu köbegün Qači külüg Qačın Qačıyu Qačula Qačıyun Qaraldai Načın bayatur doloyan bülege.*

Haenisch 1948, 6: 'Menen tuduns Söhne waren *die Sieben* Chatschi külük, Chatschin, Chatschi'u, Chatschula, Chatschi'un, Charandai *und* Natschin ba'atur.'

Kozin 1941, 83: 'U Menen-Tuduna bylo *semero* synovej: Khači-Kuljuk, Khačın, Khačiu, Khačula, Khačıun, Kharandaj *i* Načın-Baatur.'

Pelliot 1949, 127: 'Les fils de Mänän-tudun furent Qači-külük, Qačın, Qači'u, Qačula, Qaraldai, Qači'un *et* Qaraldai [that is Načın-ba'tur. — Bese.], *sept* [en tout].'

Ligeti 1962, 13: 'Menen-tuduntól *hét* fiú származott: Kacsi-külük, Kacsın, Kacsıu, Kacsula, Karaldaj, Kacsıun *és* Nacsın-baatur.' ['Menen-tudun had *seven* sons: Qači-külük, Qačın, Qači'u, Qačula, Qaraldai, Qači'un *and* Načın-ba'atur.']

de Rachewiltz 1971, 125: 'Menen-tudun had *seven* sons. They were Qachi-külük, Qachın, Qachi'u, Qachula, Qachi'un, Qaraldai *and* Nachin-ba'atur.'

Cleaves 1982, 9: 'The sons of Menen-Tudun were *the seven*, Qači Külüg, Qačın, Qači'u, Qačula, Qači'un, Qaraldai, *and* Načın Ba'atur.'

Bese: 'The sons of Menen Tudun were Qači Külüg, Qačın, Qačıyu, Qačula, Qačıyun, Qaraldai *and* Načın Bayatur.'

(3) §77 *tendeče Temüjın Qasar qoyar üli tayalan ügüleriin*

Haenisch 1948, 14: 'Darauf sagten *die Beiden* Temüdschin *und* Chasar ungemut: ...'

Kozin 1941, 90: 'Ne po vkusu prišlis' èti slova Temučzinu s Khasarom, i stali oni govorit': ...'

Pelliot 1949, 135: 'Là-dessus, Tämüjın *et* Qasar, *tous deux*, n'aimant pas [ces paroles], dirent: ...'

Ligeti 1962, 21: 'Temüdzsinnek *és* Kaszarnak azonban nem tetszett ez a beszéd, *és* így szóltak: ...' ['But Temüjın *and* Qasar were displeased with these words, *and* said: ...']

de Rachewiltz 1971, 136: 'But Temüjin and Qasar, the two of them, were displeased and said: . . .'

Cleaves 1982, 22: 'then when both Temüjin and Qasar spake, not loving [the words of their mother], having said: . . .'

Bese: 'But Temüjin and Qasar were displeased and said: . . .'

(4) §76 *Temüjin Qasar qoyar-ača Begter Belgütei qoyar bulıju abuba.*

Haenisch 1948, 13–14: 'Aber Bekter und Belgutai nahmen ihn den Beiden Temudschin und Chasar mit Gewalt fort.'

Kozin 1941, 89–90: 'Bekter s Belgutaem otnjali ee u Temučžina s Khasarom.'

Peliot 1949, 135: 'Bäktär et Bälgütäi, tous deux, l'enlevèrent aux deux Tämüjin et Qasar l'importèrent.'

Ligeti 1962, 21: ' . . . , de Temüdzsintól és Kaszartól Bekter és Belgütej erőszakkal elszedte a halat.' [' . . . , but Bekter and Belgütei took away the fish by force from Temüjin and Qasar.']

de Rachewiltz 1971, 136: ' . . . , which Bekter and Belgütei snatched away from Temüjin and Qasar.'

Cleaves 1982, 22: 'Both Begter and Belgütei wrested [it] from both Temüjin and Qasar.'

Bese: 'Begter and Belgütei wrested [it] from Temüjin and Qasar.'

(5) §76 *nigen edür Temüjin Qasar Begter Belgütei dörben qamtu sayıju geügi tataqui-tur dotora nigengegegen soqosun oroşuyıı.*

Haenisch 1948, 13–14: 'Eines Tages, als Temudschin, Chasar, Bekter und Belgutai, die Vier, miteinander dasaßen und beim Ziehen der Angel waren, ging ein glänzender Sochosun-Fisch daran.'

Kozin 1941, 89: 'Takim-to obrazom sideli odnaždy na beregu Onona Temučžin, Khasar, Bekter i Bel'gutaj. I vot na odin iz zakinutykh krjučiev popalas' blestjaščaja rybka-sokhosun.'

Peliot 1949, 135: 'Un jour, Tämüjin, Qasar, Bäktär et Bälgütäi, s'étant installés ensemble tous quatre, tirèrent l'hameçon; un soqosun doré s'y était pris.'

Ligeti 1962, 21: 'Egyszer Temüdzsin, Kaszar, Bekter és Belgütej négyen együtt üldögéltek és horgásztak. Közben egy fényes szokoszun-hal akadt a horogra, . . .' ['One day Temüjin, Qasar, Bekter and Belgütei, the four, were sitting together and were angling. In the meantime a shiny soqosun-fish was caught, . . .']

de Rachewiltz 1971, 136: 'One day Temüjin, Qasar, Bekter and Belgütei, the four of them, were sitting together, and were angling. A shiny minnow was caught, . . .'

Cleaves 1982, 22: 'One day, while Temüjin, Qasar, Begter and Belgütei — [all] four — were sitting together [on the bank] and pulling a hook, a bright soqosun was come unto [it].'

Bese: 'One day, while Temüjin, Qasar, Begter *and* Belgütei were sitting together [on the bank] and pulling a hook, a bright *soqosun*-fish was come unto it.'

Being typical, the above examples aptly illustrate how the translators of the *SH* applied the above quoted rule of translating the serial coordinate nominals (personal names). Professor Ligeti is most consistent in observing this rule, while some others keep to it only occasionally. Most translators, however, rudely violated this rule of translation. Translations like 'die Beiden. . . und . . .', 'die Sieben . . . und . . .' (Haenisch), '...et . . ., tous deux', '...et . . ., sept [en tout]' (Pelliot), '...and . . ., the four of them', '...and . . ., the two of them' (de Rachewiltz), 'the seven, . . ., and . . .', 'the twain, . . .and . . .' (Cleaves), etc., are not only redundant, but also misinterpreted.

But this is not the only problem, as the following two examples reveal:

(6) §20 *ta Belgünüdei Bügünüdei qoyar köbegüd minu . . .*

Haenisch 1948, 3: 'Ihr meine *beiden* Söhne Belgunotai *und* Bugunotai . . .'

Kozin 1941, 81: 'Vy, *dvoe* synovej moikh, Bel'gunotaj *i* Bugunotaj . . .'

Pelliot 1949, 123: 'Vous, mes *deux* fils Bälgünütäi *et* Bügünütäi, . . .'

Ligeti 1962, 11: 'Fiaim, Belgünütej *és* Bügünütej, . . .' ['My sons, Belgünütei *and* Bügünütei, . . .']

de Rachewiltz 1971, 121: 'You, my *two* sons Belgünütei *and* Bügünütei, . . .'

Cleaves 1982, 4: 'Ye, my *two* sons, Belgünütei *and* Bügünütei . . .'

Bese: 'You, my sons, Belgünüdei *and* Bügünüdei, . . .'

(7) §71 *tere üge-dür Örbei Soqatai jirin qatud ügülerün*

Haenisch 1948, 12: 'Auf solche Worte sprachen die *beiden* Frauen Orbai *und* Sochatai: . . .'

Kozin 1941, 88: 'Khanši že Orbaj *i* Sokataj ej otvetili tak: . . .'

Pelliot 1949, 133: 'A ces mots, *les deux* qatun, Orbai *et* Soqatai, dirent: . . .'

Ligeti 1962, 19: 'E szavakra Örbei *és* Szokataj így válaszolt: . . .' ['At these words Örbei *and* Soqatai said: . . .']

de Rachewiltz 1971, 133: 'At these words the *two* wives Örbei *and* Soqatai said: . . .'

Cleaves 1982, 19: 'At that word, when the *two* qatud, Örbei *and* Soqatai, spake: . . .'

Bese: 'At that word the wives Örbei *and* Soqatai said: . . .'

If the numerals *qoyar* 'two' and *jirin* 'two fem.' are used as the attributes of *köbegüd* 'sons' and *qatud* 'wives' resp., then the conjunction 'and' between the serial coordinate personal names is redundant and as such should be omitted from the translations. If, on the other hand, these numerals are equivalent with the conjunction 'and', then 'beiden', 'deux' and 'two' are redundant. It may verify the latter assumption that numerals following serial coordinial personal names can be omitted in similar cases. E.g. §197 *Tojtoya*

Qutu Čilayun köbegüd-lüge-ben čögen kümün beyes-iyen dutayaǰu yarbai 'Toǰtoǰa, with his sons Qutu, Čilayun, [and] few people, saving oneself, ran away.' (Here **Qutu Čilayun qoyar kübegüd-lüge-ben* may also be possible.) Agreeing with the translation of Professor Ligeti I think that in (6) and (7) *qoyar* 'two' and *řirin* 'two fem.' cannot be the attributes of *köbegüd* 'sons' and *qatud* 'wives', and should be translated as a conjunction meaning 'and'.

(8) §23 *Belgünüdei Bügünüdei Buǰu Qataki Buqatu Salči dörbegüle abulčaba.*

Haenisch 1948, 3—4: '... , nahmen Belgunotai, Bugunotai, Buchu chatagi und Buchatu saldshi die vier jeder etwas für sich.'

Kozin 1941, 81: '*četyre brata* — Belgunotaj Bugunotaj, Bugu-Khatagi i Bukhatu-Salčži — zabrali sebe vse, ...'

Pelliot 1949, 124: 'Bälgünütai, Bügünütai, Buqu-Qatagi et Buqatu-Salji prirent chacun une part, à eux quatre.'

Ligeti 1962, 11—12: 'Belgünütej, Bügünütej, Buku-katagi és Bukatuszaldzsi, *ők négyen* kivették részüket, ...' ['Belgünütei, Bügünütei, Buqu-qatagi and Buqatu-salji, all four, took each his part.']

de Rachewiltz 1971, 121: '*The four* Belgünütei, Bügünütei, Buqu-qatagi and Buqatu Salji all got their shares; ...'

Cleaves 1982, 5: 'Belgünütei, Bügünütei, Buǰu Qatagi, and Buǰatu Salji — all four — took [each his part].'

Here, the interpretation as 'four together', 'all four' of Mo. *dörbegüle* following a series of coordinate personal names raises some doubt. *Dörbegüle* can either be translated as a separate word: 'Belgünüdei, Bügünüdei, Buǰu Qatagi, Buqatu Salči — four together — took jointly [each his part]', or it can be divided into *dörben* 'four' functioning as 'and' and the den. n. suffix *-güle*, otherwise compatible with numerals only, referring to the whole nominal group: 'Belgünüdei, Bügünüdei, Buǰu Qataki and Buqatu Salči together took jointly [each his part].'

2. When translating the following passage, we are faced with the problem of how individuals were named and what the order of the nominals referring to occupation and the personal name was.

§124 *Tayičiyudai Qutu moriči Mulqalqu ǰurban-ni aduǰu adūlatuǰai.*

Haenisch 1948, 34: '*Die Drei* von den Taitšhi'ut, Chutu, Moritschi und Mulchalchu, beauftragte er mit der Hütung der Pferdeherren, ...'

Kozin 1941, 110: 'Tajčjudcev Khutu, Moričiči i Mulkhalkhu on naznačil zavedyvat' tabunom.'

Pelliot 1949, 157: 'Que Tayiči'udaï, Qutu-moričiči et Mulqalqu fassent paître nos troupeaux de chevaux.'

Ligeti 1962, 41: 'Tajcsiut-nembeli Kutu, Moricsi és Mulkalku, őrizzéték a méneseiket.' ['Qutu, Moričiči and Mulqalqu of the Tayičiyud tribe, you shall tend the herds of horses!']

de Rachewiltz 1972, 165: 'The *three* Tayichi'ut, Qutu, Morichi and Mulqalqu shall tend the herds of horses!'

Cleaves 1982, 57: 'As for the Tayiçi'ud Qutu, Moriçi, and Mulqalqu — [all] three — let them herd the herds.'

Owing to the numeral *γurban* 'three' only three persons can be concerned in this sentence. The question is who these persons were; Tayiçiγudai, horse-herder Qutu and Mulqalqu as Pelliot thought, or Qutu, Moriçi and Mulqalqu of the Tayiçiγud tribe, as the other translators (and Poucha 1956, 88) believed?

The latter translators understood that *moriçi* 'horse-herder' was a personal name in this context, while *Tayiçiγudai* meaning 'male member of the Tayiçiγud clan', was used to define the ethnic status of Qutu, Moriçi and Mulqalqu. This argument can be verified by two facts indirectly. On the one hand, male names denoting occupations, e.g. Khal. *Togōtš* (cook), Bur. *Tarjāšan* (farmer), Bur. *Adūši*, Kalm. *Adūtš* (herder of horses), Khak. *Malč'in* (cowherd), etc., are well attested in the Mongolian name-giving. On the other hand, derivatives of clan, tribal and people names with the suffix MMo. *.dai*, *.dei* 'member male' preceding a personal name designate the ethnic status of the person in the *SH*. E.g. *Adarkidai Qongqai* 'Qongqai of the Adarkin', *Ĵalayirtai Bala* 'Bala of the Ĵalayir', *Jegüredei Qaliγudar* 'Qaliγudar of the Jegüren', etc. (On this see also Street 1957, 40). When, however, the names of several people belonging to the same ethnic group are enumerated in the text of the *SH*, the 13th-century anonymous author uses another form, notably a clan, tribal or people name + the genitive suffix, to denote their ethnic status. E.g. §133 *Ĵürkin-ü Seče beki Tayiçu terigüten Ĵürkin* 'The Ĵürkin Seče Beki, Tayiçu at the head of the Ĵürkin's', §120 *Bayarin-u Qorči Üsün ebügen Kökečos* 'Qorči, old man Üsün, Köke-čos of the Bayarin', §120 *Ĵalayir-un Qačiyun Toγurayun Qarayai Toγurayun Qaraldai Toγurayun ede γurban Toγurayun* 'Qačiyun Toγurayun, Qarayai Toγurayun, Qaraldai Toγurayun of the Ĵalayir, these three Toγurayun's', etc. This rule is sufficiently strong to exclude the possibility of the name *Tayiçiγudai* functioning as a tribal designation 'of the Tayiçiγud' in the studied passage. *Tayiçiγudai* is then clearly a personal name.

As for the occupation name *moriçi* 'horse-herder', it may refer either to Qutu or Mulqalqu. As is well known, certain words referring to occupation, before personal names usually signify the person's actual vocation (e.g. *bagš Rintšen* 'the teacher Rinchen'); when however they are used after the personal name, they tend to indicate honorary titles (e.g. *Rintšen bagš* 'Rinchen the teacher'). Consider, however, e.g. Khal. *ulätš* 'coachman' in *ulätš Süx* and *Süx ulätš*, which are in fact freely reversible. (Cf. also *SH* §188 *Kökečü aytači* 'Kökečü the horse-herder', §§130, 136 *bayurči Sikigür* 'the cook Šikigür', and §213 *Önggür bayurči* 'Önggür the cook.) Thus the function of *moriçi* 'horse-herder' is somewhat ambiguous and may be a subject of further consideration.

What really matters here is that it can by no means be regarded as a personal name. Thus the correct translation of the sentence §124 *Tayičiyudai Qutu moriči Mulqalqu γurban-ni aduγu adūlatuyai* may read 'Tayičiyudai, horse-herder Qutu and Mulqalqu shall tend the herds of horses'.

3. For their former services, Chingis Khan — as a reward — extended the privileges of certain peoples declaring a kind of exemption from punishment. Let us see the examples first:

(1) §203 (*Činggis qayan Siki Qutuqu-da ügüleriün . . .*) *basa tusas-un činu tula yisün aldal-dur bü aldatuyai* '(Činggis Khan spoke unto Siki Qutuqu: . . .) Again, because of thy services, let him not be subject to nine punishments!'

(2) §205 (*basa Činggis qayan Boγorču-da ügüleriün . . .*) *yisün aldal-dur bü aldatuyai* '(Činggis Khan spoke again unto Boγorču: . . .) Let him not be punished for nine punishments!'

(3) §211 (*basa Činggis qayan Jelme-dü ügüleriün . . .*) . . . *Jelme yisün aldal aldabasu eregü-dür bü orotuyai* '(Again, Činggis Khan spoke unto Jelme: . . .) If Jelme commits nine crimes, let him not be subject to punishment!'

(4) §214 (*basa Činggis qayan Boroqul-a ügüleriün . . .*) *Boroqul yisün aldal aldabasu bü aldatuyai* '(Again, Činggis Khan spoke unto Boroqul: . . .) If Boroqul commits nine crimes, let him not be subject to punishments!'

(5) §219 When rewarding Sorγan Sira and his two sons, Čilayun and Čimbai, Chingis Khan said as follows: . . . *yisün aldal-dur eregü-dür bü orotuyai* 'Let them not be subject to punishment in the case of nine transgressions!'

In the phrases listed above, the number of unpunished offences by those awarded privileges for their merits was set at nine by Chingis Khan. The numeral *yisün* 'nine' has an outstanding place in Mongolian numerology. It is sufficient to refer to *SH* §202 *yisün költü čayayan tuy* 'white standard having nine tails', the main symbol of the might of Chingis Khan (on this see de Rachewiltz 1980, 44), or §245 *yisün keleten irgen* 'people having nine tongues', a primitive reference to ethnic "alienness", or again the passage which says that if the bow is bent very much, the arrow will fly 'a distance of nine hundred fathoms' (§195 *yisün řayud alda řařar*). It cannot be mere exaggeration to say that considering the symbolism of numbers, it cannot be an accident that Temüjin was exactly nine years old when he was taken by his father to ask for a wife (§61), that fleeing the Tayičiyud, Temüjin spent nine days without food or drink in the depths of the forest (§80), or that Chingis Khan gave exactly nine squadrons of troops to his eldest son Joči (§242). (For the significance of the number nine with the Mongols see also de Rachewiltz 1980, 45, and the (incomplete) bibliography listed there.) My colleague Ts. Önörbajan also mentioned *Khal. jösön tsagān beleg* 'the nine white gifts' which corresponds to *naiman tsagān mori, neg tsagān temē* 'eight white horses, one white camel', possibly one of the most valuable pres-

ents. Far from being complete, the above list is sufficient to prove that number nine indicating the extent of immunity in the above cited formulae has a symbolic meaning.

4. In the §245 of the *SH* “we reach the climax of the story of Teb-Tenggeri and Chinggis-qan” — Igor de Rachewiltz wrote. At the beginning of the story all sorts of strangers (*yisün keleten irgen* ‘people having nine tongues’, ‘people having many tongues’ (cf. de Rachewiltz 1982, 80—81; this expression is a primitive reference to ethnic alienness in my mind) including the men of Chingis Khan gathered at Teb Tenggeri’s camp. Odčigin, the younger brother of Chingis Khan, sent his envoy Soqor to call back the people who had departed. But Teb Tenggeri beat up the envoy Soqor, put his saddle on his back and sent him home on foot with the following message: *Odčigin ta ĵirin elčiten bolĵuyui*. This very simple sentence is to be examined now. Its translations include:

Haenisch 1948, 116: “Ottshigin und du, ihr beide habt Boten!”

Kozin 1941, 177: ‘Budeš’ poslom kak raz pod paru Otčiginu!’

Ligeti 1962, 112: ‘Otcsigintól, tóletek két követet várunk, . . .’ [‘We are waiting two envoys from Otčigin, from you, . . .’]

de Rachewiltz 1982, 50: “I am very grateful to both Otchigin and you, . . .”

Cleaves 1982, 179: “Odčigin and ye, [ye] twain, are [ones] having a benefit.”

In a footnote Kozin deemed this simple sentence to be a pun defying translation. Haenisch failed to recognize the real function of *ĵirin* ‘two female’ in this sentence. Igor de Rachewiltz and Prof. Cleaves tried to give the grounds for their translations in a lengthy note each. Both being highly revealing, I am going to quote them in full.

de Rachewiltz 1982, 81 writes: “‘I am grateful to both Otchigin and you’ renders *Otchigin ta ĵirin elchiten* (read *achitan*) *bolĵu’ui*. The emendation *achitan* ‘deserving gratitude’ for *elchiten* ‘having messengers’ is suggested in an unpublished note by Fr. Mostaert on the word *hachi* ‘benefit’ in the *Hua-i i-yü* of 1389. As it stands, the phrase ‘Otchigin and you both are with messengers’ does not make much sense. The reading *achitan* is found in the *AT* II, 40, 1.7. The Bibliothèque nationale MS of the *AT*, formerly belonging to Pelliot, has (135v, 12) *achi tan*. Ligeti’s tacit correction ‘elchi-ten’ (*SHA*, p. 175), is, therefore, not only unwarranted, but also casts doubts on the reliability of his text editing. The expression *achitan bolĵu’ui* corresponds to modern *achitai bolul-a* ‘I am very grateful’, ‘thank you’. See Lessing, p. 8b; Mostaert, *Dict. ordos*, p. 35b. Teb-Tenggeri sarcastically thanks Temüge-otchigin and Soqor for the ‘gift’ of the horse which he has just seized from him. I have no doubt that Mostaert’s interpretation is the correct one. As noted

by Ligeti, p. 179, n. 245, to make a horseman carry the saddle on his back and send him home on foot is a humiliation; even more so is it to force someone to apologize kneeling behind one's back, as Otchigin was subsequently compelled to do."

Cleaves 1982, 179n writes: "The words *Odčigin ta širin elčiten bolžu'ui*, as they stand, mean "Odčigin and ye, [ye] twain, are [ones] having messengers." Such a statement, however, is not in consonance with the context of the rest of the passage.

In a letter dated December 2, 1954 the Reverend Antoine MOSTAERT proposed the following solution:

"*Elčiten* must be a textual error. The *Altan tobči (nova)* has the reading *ačitan* instead of *elčiten*. Cf. *Altan Tobči A Brief History of the Mongols*, Vol. II, p. 40, ll. 6—7. *Ačitan* means 'having a benefit (= conferring a benefit)'. There is a great chance that *ačitan* is the original reading. Then it must be understood that Teb Tenggeri scoffs at Odčigin and at Soqor, just as he will the next day at Odčigin alone, when he will say in irony to the latter: *Soqor elči'en ilegü činu šöb bui* 'Thou hast been right to send thy messenger Soqor'. He confiscates the horse ridden by Soqor and, feigning to consider it as a gift or a present which Soqor had come to present to him, he said: *Odčigin ta širin ačitan bolžu'ui*. 'Odčigin and ye, both of you, ye are benefactors' (= Odčigin and thou, I thank for the gift).

"*Ačitu kümün* is still what is said today for 'benefactor'.

"I incline very much toward this solution, not only because it is the reading which the *Altan tobči (nova)* presents, but also because an error *elčiten* for *ačitan* is rather easily explained. *Ačitan* and *elčiten* resemble each other graphically."

Haenisch and Kozin simply misunderstood this simple sentence. Igor de Rachewiltz, Prof. Cleaves and A. Mostaert, however, not only misunderstood but also misinterpreted it. Ironically, the only translator who grasped the message of this sentence was Prof. Ligeti criticized by Igor de Rachewiltz. But let us place the sentence itself in the focus of attention.

As has been seen, the sentence *Odčigin ta širin elčiten bolžuyui* is a message sent by Teb Tenggeri to Temüke Odčigin through the humiliated envoy, Soqor. The key to the interpretation of the sentence lies in clarifying the function of Mo. *ta* 'pron. of second person singular and plural (in polite address); used in plural sense only in connection with other indication of plurality' and MMo. *širin* 'two female'. In the translations of Heanisch, Prof. Cleaves, A. Mostaert, de Rachewiltz and even that of Ts. Damidinsüren 1957, 210 *ta* 'you' refers to Soqor and not to Odčigin. Consequently, MMo. *širin* 'two' should be translated as 'and' in this sentence, in keeping the rule of translating serial coordinate nominals. And this is the very point that raises the problems. For *širin* 'two fem.' is used in the text of the *SH* in reference to women. Odčigin

and Soqor were, however, men. Should the first part of the sentence *Odčigin ta ĵirin . . .*, translate as 'Ottschigin und du, ihr beide', 'both Otchigin and ye, [ye] twain', 'Odčigin and ye, both of you (= Odčigin and thou, . . .)' as the above cited scholars opined, then the correct phrase would be **Odčigin ta goyar . . .* As it is not so, *ta* 'you' must refer to Odčigin and MMo. *ĵirin* 'two fem.' must be the attribute of *elčiten* 'having envoys' — just like in Prof. Ligeti's translation. In this sense *elčiten* 'having envoys' must have belonged to the so-called feminine nouns, or at least to the ambivalent ones. (On this see Street 1957, 22—23.) The plural form *elčiten* of MMo. *elčitü* 'having envoy' in *ĵirin elčiten* 'having two envoys' is required by the MMo. congruence of number. At the same time, *elčiten bol-* 'to have envoys' is a phrase similar to e.g. Mo. *moritai bol-* in *tere moritai bolba* 'he has his own horse [now]'. Hence the correct punctuation of the sentence should be *Odčigin, ta ĵirin elčiten bolĵuyui* according to the orthography of most European languages, with the possible English translation being 'You have to send two envoys, Odčigin'.

Still to remain with the verbal interpretation of the sentence, one is at a loss trying to explain why Prof. Cleaves, de Rachewiltz and A. Mostaert had doubts about the interlinear Chinese translation of the *SH*, which uses the expression 'having envoys' — as they themselves contended. Why did they ignore this important piece of information and let themselves be misled by *ačitan* in *Altan tobči*, which is simply a scribal error for *elčiten*? The only justification for them to do so would have been if the interlinear translation of the *SH* had been fraught with misinterpretations. This, however, is not the case. Apart from a few minor inaccuracies, the Chinese glosses are of high informative value. Not that their translations would have been perfect even with the interlinear gloss as their notes clearly reveal, but they would at least have contained the original lexical components of the text. However, they thought that *elčiten* 'having envoys' "does not make much sense", "such a statement, . . ., is not in consonance with the context of the rest of the passage". So, to create "consonance" and give sense to the sentence, they translated the lapsus calami of *Altan tobči*, *ačitan* as 'having benefit' and adduced tortuous arguments to verify it. They must have strongly been compelled to explain their choice, as the translations they suggested did not make the meaning of the sentence any clearer. On the contrary . . .

In my view, there is no irony or sarcasm whatever in the sentence *Odčigin, ta ĵirin elčiten bolĵuyui*. This message sent by Teb Tenggeri to Temüke Odčigin is derived from the diplomatic customs of nomadic peoples. After a careful reading of the *SH* or the works of Rashid-ad-Din or Juvaini, no one will fail to notice what escaped the attention of the above quoted translators; notably, that in the 13th century, the rules of diplomacy of nomadic peoples in Central Asia included that of sending two envoys on the basis of mutual agreement. It is sufficient to refer to §181 of the *SH*, according to which,

Chingis Khan sent word to several people that should envoys be delegated to him, they must be two at a time. (I will discuss this question in more detail in a paper entitled "Envoys around Chingis Khan" to be published in one of the forthcoming issues of *Acta Orient. Hung.*) Reading §245 of the *SH*, we are amply justified to assume that Odëigin violated this rule by sending only one envoy to Teb Tenggeri, who took revenge by humiliating the envoy.

(To be continued)

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