

ÉTUDES MONGOLES  
ET SIBÉRIENNES

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*The name of the Mongols in Asia and Europe:  
A reappraisal*

PERHAPS I should have entitled this paper "The names of the Mongols in Asia and Europe" since, at the time of their greatest expansion in the 13th century, the Mongols were known by several names which, curiously enough, were mostly inaccurate for different reasons.

In a Chinese source of the mid-10th century (the *Chiu T'ang-shu*), which refers to events in the previous century, the Mongols' tribal name appears for the first time.<sup>1</sup> The Chinese

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1. The Mongols first appear (under this name) as a small branch of the Shih-wei 室韋 tribe which in the 9th century resided in the valley of the Argun River near the present Sino-Russian border. In the following two centuries, no doubt as a result of internal and external pressures, they moved westwards, almost certainly along the Kerulen River (Xerlen Gol), eventually settling at the sources of this river on the wooded slopes of the sacred mountain Burqan Qaldun of *The Secret History of the Mongols*, i.e. present-day Kentei Qan (Xentii Xan) in northern Mongolia. Except for their mention in the *T'ang Histories* (see below n. 2) in connection with the Shih-wei, and a few other tantalizingly brief and

unlightening references to them in the Chinese sources (*s.a.* 1071 and 1084), the Mongols do not reappear *historically* as such until the 12th century. All we have for the preceding period are semi-historical accounts and legends preserved in *The Secret History of the Mongols* and in Rašīd al-Dīn's great work. See P. RATCHNEVSKY, *Les Che-wei étaient-ils des Mongols?*, in *Mélanges de sinologie offerts à Monsieur Paul Demiéville* (Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1966), t. I, pp. 225-51 [Bibliothèque de l'Institut des hautes études chinoises, XX]; Idem, *Činggis-khan. Sein Leben und Wirken* (Wiesbaden, Steiner Verlag, 1983), pp. 5-14 (also for earlier references to P. Pelliot, Wang Kuo-wei, etc.). Cf. also Louis HAMBIS, *L'histoire des Mongols avant Gengis-khan d'après les sources chinoises et mongoles, et la documentation*

transcription *meng-wu* 蒙兀 (*\*mung-nguat*) represents an original *\*Mongγut* or *\*Mongγul*. In the corresponding passage of the *Hsin T'ang-shu*, in place of *meng-wu* we find *meng-wa* 蒙瓦 (*\*mung-ngwa*), i.e. *\*Mongγa*.<sup>2</sup> Although this may well be a mere graphic variant of *meng-wu*, as claimed by Pelliot,<sup>3</sup> it is possible that *\*Mongγa* is a phonetic variant of *\*Mongγut*/*\*Mongγul* in the form of *\*Mongγa(l)*, as suggested by H. Serruys.<sup>4</sup> If the correct

conservée par Rašid-ud-Dīn, *T'oung Pao*, 14 (1970), pp. 125–33. Besides the Shih-wei “Mongols” (who appear to have been a people of mixed Mongol and Tungus culture), other Mongolian-speaking tribes had had intercourse with China before the historical Mongols; those may be regarded therefore as “Proto-Mongols.” Among them are the T'o-pa (*\*Tabγač*) founders of the Wei dynasty (386–557) and the Khitans who established the Liao dynasty (907–1125). However, the identification of these tribes as Mongols or Proto-Mongols is difficult and controversial.

2. See *Chiu T'ang-shu* 舊唐書 (all references to the Chinese *Standard Histories* are to the *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'ian* 四部叢刊 edition), 149B, 10a; *Hsin T'ang-shu* 新唐書 219, 7a. Strictly speaking, the transcription *\*mung-nguat* would postulate an original *\*Mungγut* or, less strictly, *\*Mungγul* (since Chinese cannot render the final *l*). However, the character *\*mung/meng* 蒙, as later the character *mang* 忙, was used to render Mongolian *mong*, because Chinese has no other way of rendering that sound. Moreover, we know from the Latin transcriptions of the name that in the first half of the 13th century the vowel of the first syllable was definitely *o*, not *u*. Since in Mongolian the vowel *o* of the first accented syllable is quite stable, there is no reason to believe that it could have developed from an

earlier *u*. Therefore, the *Chiu T'ang-shu* transcription must be interpreted as representing *\*Mongγut* or *\*Mongγul*.

3. See *Journal asiatique*, 15 (1920), p. 146, n. 1; *T'oung Pao*, 26 (1929), p. 126, n. 2. Cf. RATCHNEVSKY, *Les Che-wei...*, pp. 228, n. 2; 237, 238 and n. 5; D. SINOR, On Some Ural-Altai Plural Suffixes, *Asia Major*, N.S. 2 (1952), pp. 214–15.

4. See H. SERRUYS, *Mongyol: Moyul and Mangyus: Mayus*, *Acta Orientalia Hung.*, 36 (1982), pp. 475ff. However, Serruys reconstructs *\*mung-nguat* (*sic*) as *Mongγol*, and for him *Mongγol* < *Mongγal* (*ibid.* p. 478), as Onon “the Onon R.” < Onan, *olon* “many” < *olan*, etc. (For this common phenomenon, see N. POPPE, Remarks on the Vocalism of the Second Syllable in Mongolian, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 14, 1951, pp. 194–7.) This is also the view shared by POPPE, *op. cit.* pp. 189–90. In our case, however, the form *\*Mongγal* is simply due to the weakening of the vowel of the second (unstressed) syllable which makes the *u* sound like an *a*. For example, *\*ordu* (< Turkic *ordu*) “the khan’s encampment or palace” > Middle Mongolian *ordo* (through progressive assimilation), but *orda* in John of Pian di Carpine’s and William of Rubruck’s reports. The “Caracaron” (= Qara Qorum) of one of the mss. of the *Historia Mongalorum* may be a metathetical form of “Caracoran”; cf. the “Carachora” of the Catalan Map. See

interpretation of *meng-wu* is \*Mongγut, as I believe, this form is in all probability an ancient plural of \*Mongγul.<sup>5</sup> The tribal name in question would then occur in its earliest recorded forms as \*Mongγul/\*Mongyal.<sup>6</sup>

By the 13th century, \*Mongγul had developed into Mongγol through regular progressive assimilation in some Mongolian dialects, but Mongγul was still retained in other dialects and the form Mongyal is also well attested.<sup>7</sup>

P. PELLIOU, *Notes on Marco Polo* (Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1959), I, p. 165; A. VAN DEN WYNGAERT OFM (ed.), *Sinica Franciscana, I. Itinera et relationes Fratrum Minorum saeculi XIII et XIV* (Quaracchi [Firenze], Apud Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1929), pp. 118, 213. For *u* > *a*, *v* in the modern Mongolian dialects, cf. Mongolian *tuγul* (< \**tuγul* > Middle Mongolian *tuqul*) "one-year-old calf", Buryat (Alar) *tuqāl*, Khalkha *t'ugul*. See POPPE, *op. cit.* p. 199; cf. G. J. RAMSTEDT, *Das Schriftmongolische und die Urgamundart phonetisch verglichen* (Helsingfors, Druckerei der finnischen Litteraturgesellschaft, 1902), pp. 34, § 39; 40, § 48; A. MOSTAERT, *Le dialecte des Mongols Urdus* (Sud), *Anthropos*, 22 (1927), p. 867, § 43.

5. According to Pelliot, "Monghod" is the plural of "Monghol"—just as "Taičič'ud" is the plural of "Taičič'ul". See the entry "Mongoli" in the *Enciclopedia Italiana di Scienze, Lettere e Arti* (Rome, 1949), XXIII, p. 661a; P. PELLIOU et L. HAMBIS, *Histoire des campagnes de Gengis Khan. Cheng-wou ts'in-tcheng lou* (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1951), I, p. 151.

6. The names in Chinese transcription found in the *Chiu T'ang-shu* 195, 3a; in the *Wu-tai shih* 五代史 73, 9a; and in the *Liao-shih* 遼史 33, 8b, 35, 9a, and 46, 5a, which have been hypothetically reconstructed as \**mākās* and \**moyos*, refer to Tangut and Turcic tribes, not to tribes or clans of

Mongol stock. Therefore, these names cannot be called into question in the present discussion. See SERRUYS, *op. cit.* pp. 476–7. Cf. K. A. WITTFOGEL and FÈNG Chia-shêng, *History of Chinese Society. Liao (907–1125)*, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, N.S. 36 [1946] (Philadelphia, 1949), p. 91, n. 23.

7. The form Mongγol (< \*Mongγul) is found e.g. in Simon of St. Quentin's *Historia Tartarorum*. See S. DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Histoire des Tartares*, ed. by J. Richard (Paris, Paul Geuthner, 1965), p. 92 (XXXII, 34): "Ipsi quoque Tartari proprie loquendo se vocant Mongli sive Mongol." The form Mongγul is the one regularly attested in the Chinese transcriptions of the 13th and 14th centuries (in the *Yüan tien-chang* 元典章, *Yüan-shih* 元史, etc.) as *meng-ku* 蒙古 (\*Mongγu[ll]); it is also the one found in Marco Polo's book, but unfortunately in a passage of doubtful authenticity. See A. C. MOULE and P. PELLIOU, *Marco Polo: The Description of the World* (London, Routledge, 1938), I, p. 183: "And therefore the Tartars are sometimes called Mongul." As for Mongal, it is found in this form in John of Pian di Carpine's account (e.g. in the very title of the work: *Historia Mongalorum*), and in the Uighurized and contracted form Moal (= Mo'al) in William of Rubruck's *Itinerarium* (VAN DEN WYNGAERT, *op. cit.* p. 205 *et passim*), about which see further on.

The Mongols' name is first recorded in Uighur script (which the Mongols had adopted early in the 13th century) in the legend of the seal of Güyüg (r. 1246–48) on the famous letter to Pope Innocent IV (1246) in the form MWNKKWL, i.e. Mongγol or Mongγul.<sup>8</sup> From then on, and irrespective of dialect variations, this name has always been written in the same way, which we have conventionally transcribed as “Mongγol.”<sup>9</sup>

(Regarding the etymology of the name Mongγul, the ending *γul* may be a suffix denoting a clan, tribe or people.<sup>10</sup> If so, we are left with the root *mong* the origin and meaning of which

8. It is in the last word in the second line of the legend. See I. DE RACHEWILTZ, *Qan, Qa'an and the Seal of Güyüg*, in K. Sagaster and M. Weiers (eds.), *Documenta Barbarorum. Festschrift für W. Heissig zum 70. Geburtstag, Veröffentlichungen der Societas Uralo-Altaica*, 18 (Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1983), pl. I (p. 274). The name Mongγol (or Mongγul) occurs also in the second line of the so-called “Stone of Chingis,” i.e. the stele of Činggis Qan's nephew Yisüngge, reputedly the earliest monument in Uighur-Mongol script (ca. 1225). In my opinion, however, this monument is of much later date. See my article “Some Remarks on the Stele of Yisüngge” in Walter Heissig et al. (eds.), *Tractata altaica: Denis Sinor, sexagenario optime de rebus altaicis merito dedicata* (Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1976), pp. 487–508, esp. pp. 494–5. The Uighur script does not distinguish between *o* and *u*, therefore the Mongols' name can be read Mongγol, Mongγul and Mungγul.

9. I.e. in Script (or Written) Mongolian; however, “Mongγul” is still occasionally employed by Mongolists. See, e.g., J. R. KRUEGER, *Materials for an Oirat-Mongolian to English Citation Dictionary* (Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Publications, 1978–84), I–III, p. 602. Mongγul is also the form given in

F. D. LESSING (gen. ed.), *Mongolian-English Dictionary* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, Univ. of California Press/London, Cambridge University Press, 1960), pp. 542b–3a (several reprints by the Mongolia Society, Inc., Bloomington, Ind.). This is no doubt ultimately due to G. J. Ramstedt's influence. See his *Kalmückisches Wörterbuch* (Helsinki, Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seura, 1935), p. 264b: *mongul, mongol*. Some scholars in Japan, like S. Imanishi (1907–79), also use Mongγul *pro* Mongγol—an indication of the long survival of this old (and obsolete!) form. The precise Korean and Manchu phonetic transcriptions of the name confirm the correctness of Mongγol *v.* Mongγul. There are no great dialect variations in modern Mongolian (in all dialects the vowel of the second syllable is of course greatly reduced), except for Monguor in which the word for Mongol is Monguor (*moŋGuor* ~ *moŋGor*).

10. As we find, e.g., in the word Sartayul (Middle Mongolian Sarta'ul) “Muslim native of Central or Western Asia,” from *sartay* = Turkic *sart* (< Sanskrit *sārtha* “caravan, wealthy”) “an Iranian; merchant.” See G. CLAUSSON, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 846a.

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still elude us.<sup>11</sup> Other etymologies have been proposed, but they are hypothetical and speculative.<sup>12</sup>)

In the 12th and 13th centuries, however, the name of the Mongols in Central and Western Asia, as well as in Europe, was either Tatar/Tartar, or a variation of Mogol (Moyol); only occasionally, but never in Central or Western Asia, do we find the name Mongol (Mongyol).

I shall only review briefly the designation Tatar/Tartar, since much has been written already on the subject and there is not much I can add to it.<sup>13</sup>

In the 12th century, the Tatar people of eastern Mongolia were the most powerful tribal complex north of the Gobi. Therefore, in China and Central Asia, and further west, the

11. Cf. N. P. SHASTINA, Mongol and Turkic Ethnonyms in the Secret History of the Mongols, in L. Ligeti (ed.), *Researches in Altaic Languages* (Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1975), pp. 231-2.

12. Rašid al-Dīn says that the word "Mongol" was originally "Mūngōl" (*mūng-ōl*) meaning "feeble" and "naive"—clearly a folk etymology still current in Rašid's own time which, as we shall see, was not without some justification. (Rašid naturally thought that *mūng-ōl* was a Mongolian expression and, in this respect, he was of course mistaken.) Other proposed etymologies include: < Mongolian *mōnggū* "silver;" Mongolian Mong Ōl "the Mong (?) River;" Chinese *meng* 猛 "fierce, valiant;" and Yakut *moŋol* "great, big." See RATCHNEVSKY, *Činggis-khan*, pp. 5-6, n. 23; G. DOERFER, Der Name der Mongolen bei Rašid ad-Dīn, *Central Asiatic Journal*, 14 (1970), pp. 68-77.

13. The following is a short list of references on this complex issue: U. MONNERET DE VILLARD, *Il Libro della peregrinazione nelle parti d'oriente di Frate Riccoldo da Montecroce* (Roma, Istituto Storico Domenicano, 1948),

pp. 54ff.; MARCO POLO, *La Description du monde*, texte intégral en français moderne avec introduction et notes par L. Hambis (Paris, C. Klincksieck, 1955), p. 383; L. OLSCHKI, *Marco Polo's Asia. An Introduction to his "Description of the World" Called "Il Milione"*, trsl. by J. A. Scott (Berkeley/Los Angeles, Univ. of California Press, 1960), pp. 26, n. 44, 308ff.; J. J. SAUNDERS, Matthew Paris and the Mongols, in T. A. Sandquist and M. R. Powicke (eds.), *Essays in Medieval History Presented to Bertie Wilkinson* (Toronto, Univ. of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 124; G. A. BEZZOLA, *Die Mongolen in abendländischer Sicht [1220-1270]. Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Völkerbegegnungen* (Bern/München, Francke, 1974), pp. 33ff., 125-6; *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck. His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke 1253-1255*, trsl. by P. Jackson, with D. Morgan (London, The Hakluyt Society, 1990), pp. 16-17, n. 4; A. KLOPPROGGE, *Ursprung und Ausprägung des abendländischen Mongolenbildes im 13. Jahrhundert. Ein Versuch zur Ideengeschichte des Mittelalters* (Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz 1993), pp. 168-76 [Asiatische Forschungen, 122].

name Tatar became the common, general designation for all Mongol- and Turkic-speaking peoples of Mongolia just as, in the Middle Ages, "Frank" designated any western European.<sup>14</sup> The Persian historian Rašid-al-Dīn (*ca.* 1247–1318), who discusses this question at length in his great work, can hardly disguise his wonder at the fact that the Tatar tribe's name and renown should have spread so far and wide, from China and India to Dašt-i Qipčaq and Syria, and to the Arab populations of north Africa, indeed as far as the Maghreb.<sup>15</sup>

Because of this, the Mongolian tribesmen in Činggis Qan's time were also called Tatars by the Chinese and other peoples of Asia, and even after the destruction of the Tatar tribe by Činggis Qan in 1202, the Mongols continued to be referred to as Tatars, not only because the name had stuck, as it were, but also (and chiefly) because they had replaced the latter in the hegemony of the steppe. We must not forget that very few people outside the vast grassland of Mongolia knew what was happening there, and which of the many barbarian tribes roaming the steppe had conquered which.<sup>16</sup>

The Tatars thus enjoyed a posthumous, albeit undeserved glory (or notoriety) as their name penetrated Europe in the first decades of the 13th century from the south through the

14. On the Tatar tribe see RACHNEVSKY, *Činggis-khan*, pp. 3–4, and the literature cited on p. 4, n. 15. PELLIOU (*Histoire des campagnes*, p. 2) makes some interesting remarks on the manner in which the tribal name Tatar became the generic name for the Mongols and also for part of the Turks. Pelliot's remarks were prompted by Rašid al-Dīn's statement on this very question. See below, n. 15. Cf. S. G. KLYAŠTORNYĪ, Gosudarstva Tatar v Central'noi Azii (dočingisova época), in V. M. Solncev *et al.* (eds.), *Mongolica. K 750-letiyu "Sokrovennogo skazaniya"* (Moscow, Nauka, 1993), pp. 139–47; and *Central Asiatic Journal*, 36 (1992), pp. 72–83.

15. See RAŠID-AD-DIN, *Sbornik letopisei*, trsl. by L. A. Khetagurov (Moscow/Leningrad, AN SSSR, 1952), pp. 75, 101–3.

16. For the Chinese generic designation Ta-ta 鞑靼 (= Tatar/Mongol), see *Meng-Ta pei-lu und Hei-Ta sbih-lüeh. Chinesische Gesandtenberichte über die frühen Mongolen 1221 und 1237*, trsl., ann., and edited by E. Haenisch, Yao Ts'ung-wu, P. Olbricht, E. Pinks and W. Banck (Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1980), pp. 4–7, nn. 1–5 [Asiatische Forschungen, 56]. It should be mentioned, however, that once China was under Mongol rule, the name Ta-ta was replaced by Meng-ku (see above, n. 7).

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Near East and the crusaders, and via the Cumans, the Bulgars and other populations of the Volga region in the north. The terrifying horsemen from the depths of Asia who defeated the Russian princes, destroyed Kiev, routed the Polish and Hungarian armies and nearly took Vienna in 1242 were, of course, the dreaded Tatars, promptly and pointedly renamed Tartari in western Europe because of the phonetic affinity with the word Tartarus (Hell), and the invaders' resemblance (in popular imagination) with devils.<sup>17</sup>

And so the Mongols, assimilated on the one hand to a tribe which, ironically, had been their worst enemy, and on the other to a host of devils released from Hell, continued to be called Tatars by the Russians, and Tartars by the rest of Europe, and this not for a few decades but for centuries—in fact until modern times.<sup>18</sup>

This does not mean, however, that the name Mongol remained unknown in Europe after the European nations had established direct contact with the Mongolian empire through various diplomatic missions. Nevertheless, this true name was regarded as just another name for the Tartars, the latter designation being by now well established and widespread.<sup>19</sup> The name Mongol appears sporadically in the 13th century

17. The pun on Tatari: Tartari apparently originates with Louis IX. See SAUNDERS, *op. cit.* p. 124. For the "image" of the Mongols in western Europe see BEZZOLA, *op. cit.*, esp. part II/IV-V; and Klopprogge's excellent monograph cited above, n. 13.

18. See G. VERNADSKY, *The Mongols and Russia* (London/Oxford, Yale Univ. Press, 1953), p. 12. Cf. L. N. GUMILEV, *Searches for an Imaginary Kingdom. The Legend of the Kingdom of Prester John*, trsl. by R. E. F. Smith (Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987), p. 94. To call the Mongols "Tartars" and "Tatars" is a tradition that has been kept alive to the present time in literature, general histories of China and

Asia, reference works, etc., as well as in speech. Cf., for example, the *Enciclopedia Italiana...* (see above, n. 5), XIX, p. 39b, *s.v.* "India": "i Tartari di Genghiz Khān." We know from William of Rubruck that the Mongols objected to being referred to as Tartars, i.e. Tatars. See VAN DEN WYNGAERT, *op. cit.* p. 205; C. DAWSON, *The Mongol Mission. Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, trsl. by a Nun of Stanbrook Abbey (London/ New York, Sheed and Ward, 1955), p. 121.

19. This fact is epitomized in Marco Polo's statement cited above, n. 7.



chronicles and envoys' reports in several forms, often greatly corrupted in the course of transmission. Thus we find Mongal(i) in John of Pian di Carpine's *Historia*, Moal in William of Rubruck's *Itinerarium*, and Mongul in Marco Polo's *Il Milione*.<sup>20</sup> Simon of St. Quentin alternates between Mongli and Mogli, Mongol and Mogol.<sup>21</sup> Some of the forms recorded by these travellers are either contracted (Moal) or denasalized (Mogli, Mogol), and this poses an interesting problem.

If we look at the name of the Mongols in Central and Western Asia at the time (middle and second half of the 13th century), we see that neither the Turks, nor the Persians, nor for that matter any other people who had close relations with the Mongols actually spelled their name with an *n*. The Turks called them Moγul and Moγal (Moγul in Chaghatai), corresponding of course to Mongolian Mongγol and Mongyal respectively; the Persians called them Moγōl/Muγūl and Moγāl/Muγāl (according to the different transcriptions of the same words); in Arabic we have Mughūl (as in Persian); in Hindustani Mugh(a); in Armenian Muγal; in Syriac Mūglâyê—a metathetical form from Mūgâl; and in Greek Μουγούλιοι (from Muγul).<sup>22</sup> All the vowel changes in these forms can be easily explained, but what happened to the *n*?

20. See above, n. 7.

21. See *Histoire des Tartares* (cf. above n. 7), p. 92.

22. Turkic Moγal is evidenced by William of Rubruck's "Moal" which can only be a development of Moγal (> Mo'al > Moal), a form that must be either Turkic or Persian, not Mongolian. The transcriptions from Persian sources (Juvainī, Rašīd al-Dīn, etc.) vary from author to author because of the ambiguity of *o/u* in Persian. In Juvainī the usual form of the name is Moγōl/Muγūl—the form used also by Rašīd—but occasionally we find also Moγāl/Muγāl. It is my opinion that Persian Moγāl/Muγāl, as well as Moγōl/Muγūl, reflect Turkic forms. Cf. also modern Uighur (Aksu) Moγal.

The form "Mongyol" of the Sino-Uighur vocabulary of the Translations Bureau of the Ming (15th–16th ca.) edited by L. Ligeti (see *AO Hung.*, 19, 1966, p. 183) cannot be taken into account for it is a much later (post-Mongol Empire) production and issued by a Chinese office. In the Chinese transcription, it is customary to use *mang* (= *mong*) for the first syllable of the Mongols' name. See above, n. 2. For Armenian Muγal, cf. F. W. CLEAVES, The Mongolian Names and Terms in the *History of the Nation of Archers* by Grigor of Akanc', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 12 (1949), p. 424. For Syriac Mūglâyê, cf. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge (trsl.), *The Monks of Kāblāi Khān Emperor of China* (London, The Reli-

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The mystery of the missing *n* has been puzzling me for a long time. It is evident that all the above-mentioned forms originally go back to Uighur Turkic. Now, phonetically, an alternation Moŋγul ~ Moγul is certainly possible in the Turkic languages,<sup>23</sup> but in Uighur we find only the non-nasalized forms Moγul and Moγal. When it comes to the name of the nation there is no alternation: the form with -ŋ- simply does not exist in Uighur, witness the fact that in Persian and all the other languages which ultimately borrowed the word from Uighur we find only the denasalized form.

We must then ask ourselves: what made the Uighur Turks, who first taught their script to the Mongols and who, for several decades, acted as their scribes and secretaries, use the correct form Mongγol in the edicts and documents that they drafted in Mongolian for their masters, but Moγul (= Moγol) in those they wrote in their own language? There is no doubt that the Uighurs *could* write the correct form, and did so when it was part of an individual's personal name (as in a contract or business transaction), but not in the case of the name of the ruling nation.<sup>24</sup>

gious Tract Society, 1929), p. 152. For Greek Μουγούλοι, cf. G. MORAVCSIK, *Byzantinoturcica*. II. *Sprachreste der Türk-völker in den Byzantinischen Quellen* (2nd ed.: Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1958), p. 193. The Chaghatai form Moγul is given by N. N. POPPE, *Mongol'skii slovar' Mukaddimat al-Adab* (Moscow/Leningrad, Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk, 1938), I-III, p. 238a (repr. Gregg Int. Publ. Ltd., 1971, in one volume). For the Persian and other forms, cf. also H. SERRUYS, *Mongyol: Moyal...*, p. 477; G. DOERFER, *Der Name der Mongolen, passim*. On Anglo-Indian Mogul, see the numerous references in H. YULE and A. C. BURNELL, *Hobson-Jobson. A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive* (new edition by

W. Crooke, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 570-3, s.vv. "Mogul" and "Mogul, the Great."

23. See È. R. TENIŠEV (ed.), *Sravnitel'no-istoričeskaya grammatika tyurkskikh yazыkov. Fonetika* (Moscow, Nauka, 1984), pp. 340-1. Cf. also Yakut *moγol* ~ *moγol* ~ *moγul* "great, big." See S. KALUŻYŃSKI, *Mongolische Elemente in der jakutischen Sprache* (Warsaw/The Hague, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1962), p. 120.

24. In the third line of the Uighur (private) document published by W. Radloff in *Uigurische Sprachdenkmäler* (Leningrad, AN SSSR, 1928) [repr. Osnabrück, Biblio Verlag, 1972], p. 137, no. 81, we find a proper name spelled MWNKWL PWQ', i.e. Moŋol (? Moγul) Buqa. On the basis of this reading, L. Ligeti, *loc. cit.*, gives the

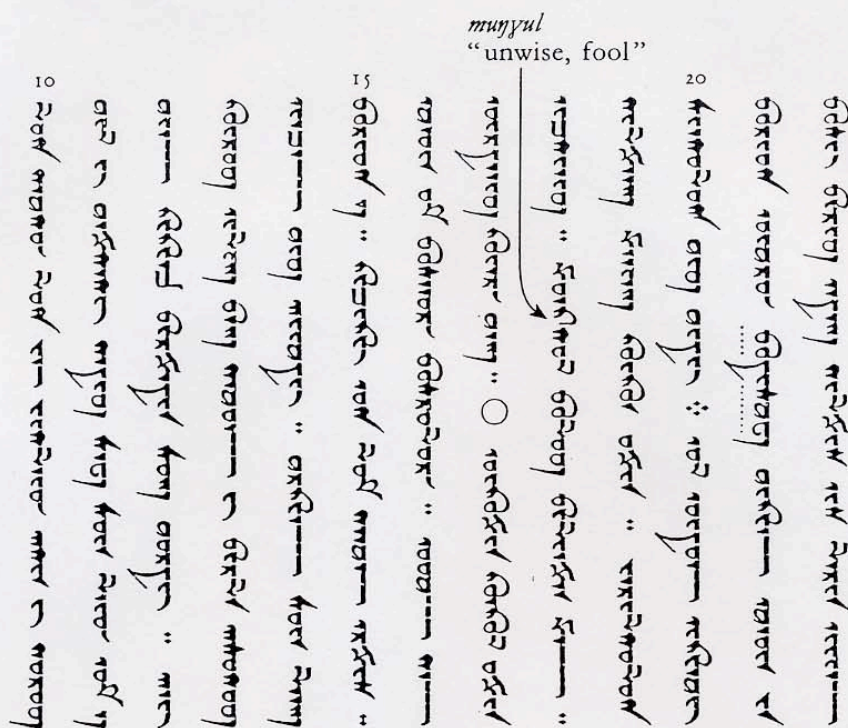


FIG. 1. *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*,  
Uighur text edited by V. V. Radlov and S. E. Malov.

The answer, I think, may be provided by a passage from the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa* in Uighur (the *Altun yaruq*) in the illustration at hand (Figure 1).<sup>25</sup>

Uighur word for “Mongol” as “Monjul.” This is not correct, since the word in question is the first element, i.e. an integral part, of a proper name and does not refer to the Mongol state. In a document of this kind, individual names would have, of course, to be spelled correctly, and here, in any case, the reading MWNKWL may well be Turkic *munjul* (= *munjul*) “foolish.” It is interesting to note that in this name we have a good example of  $\eta\gamma > \eta$  (Moŋɣol/

Moŋɣul > Moŋol/Moŋul). Cf. the *Mukaddimat al-Adab*, *loc. cit.*, where the Mongol form is “Monjul” not “Mongjul.”

25. See V. V. RADLOV and S. E. MALOV (eds.), *Suvarṇaprabhāsa (Sutra zolotogo bleska). Tekst uigurskoj redakcii* (St. Petersburg/Petrograd, Imp. Akad. Nauk, 1913–17), I–VIII, p. 624, l. 18 [Bibliotheca Buddhica, 17] (repr. Osnabrück, Biblio Verlag, 1970). For *munjul* “unwise, fool,” see CLAUSON, *op. cit.* pp. 768b–9a; V. M. NADELYAEV

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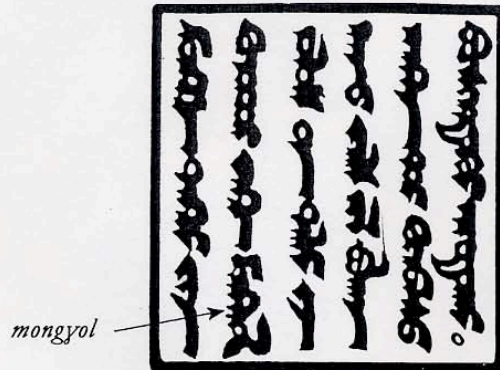


FIG. 2. Seal of the Great Khan Güyüg (r. 1246-48).

In Uighur there is a word *munγul* meaning “unwise, fool” which in Uighur script is written *exactly* as the name Mongyol (as can be seen from the legend on Güyüg’s seal, Figure 2). Clearly, it would have been courting disaster for a scribe in the Mongol khan’s service to employ the same name in Turkic (thus making the two words synonymous), for this would have been regarded as deliberately offensive. An act of *lèse-majesté* of this kind brought to the notice of the khan by a jealous colleague or enemy of the scribe would undoubtedly have cost him his life. But a very slight orthographic change—allowed moreover by the nature of the language (because of -ηγ- ~ -γ-)—would have easily solved the problem. This is why, in my opinion, Mongyol became Moγul in Uighur and, ultimately,

*et al.* (eds.), *Drevnetyurkskii slovar'* (Leningrad, Nauka, 1969), p. 351a-b. The possible connection between Turkic *muγ* “foolish, simpleton, silly” (cf. Mongolian *munγay* id.) and the name Mongyol has been discussed and highlighted by Doerfer, *op. cit.*, in relation to the folk etymology recorded by Rašīd al-Dīn; the fuller implications of this precious evidence seem to have escaped him however. In Rašīd’s etymology we find an echo of the prob-

lem that must have beset the Turkic speaking entourage of Činggis Qan and his “Uighur” Chancellery. See the biographies of Činqai (ca. 1169-1252) and Yeh-lü Ch’u-ts’ai (1189-1243) in I. de Rachewiltz, H.-L. Chan, C.-C. Hsiao and P. W. Geier (eds.), *In the Service of the Khan. Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200-1300)* (Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1993), pp. 95-112; 136-72 [Asiatische Forschungen, 123].

IGOR DE RACHEWILTZ

why the Mongols of Afghanistan are called Moghols and not Monghols, why the famous Turkish rulers of India are called Mughals and not Munghals, and also why today we read about “media moguls” and not “media monguls.”