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Middle Mongolian Past-tense *-BA* in the *Secret History*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Middle Mongolian has seven indicative endings: suffixal elements that close a predicate and can be used freely with subjects of all three persons. Like other suffixes, these participate in vowel harmony, having in each syllable—except those containing the non-harmonic *i*—an alternation between either a high vowel (*u~ü*; symbolized by *U*) or a low one (*a~e*; symbolized by *A*).[1] Unlike other endings, however, these seven also have alternative shapes whose usage seem to correlate with the sex or number of the individual(s) referred to by the subject of the clause. But this correlation is far from perfect, and since sex- and number-marking of the sort proposed for these indicative endings is unknown in later stages of Mongolian, the whole matter remains something of a puzzle—despite discussion by scholars such as Doerfer, Ozawa, and Weiers.[2]

Each of the indicative endings has three of these sex- and number-marking alternants, tentatively referred to as feminine, singular, and plural forms. Feminine forms are relatively infrequent even in the *Secret History*, and rare in other Middle Mongolian documents.[3] The singular and plural forms are much more common, and several of them—though not the semantic contrast between alternants—survived into much later stages of the language. Because of the rarity of many of the forms in other Middle Mongolian documents, it is only through detailed investigation of the *Secret History* text that one can hope to reach a fuller understanding of the semantics and usage of these alternants. But it remains to be seen whether the number of attestations in that text is sufficient to permit a fully satisfying analysis of whatever marking-system was present in the spoken language underlying the earliest written texts.

The present article focuses on just one of the indicative endings: the ending represented here as *-BA*.[4] This ending is singled out for two reasons. First, it is by far the most common

1. Other symbols here used for automatic phonological alternations include *J* (= *j* after *l* or a vowel, *c* otherwise), and *G* (= *g* in front harmony, *q* otherwise). Parenthesized *U*, as in the converbial ending *-(U)n*, represents zero after a vowel, *U* (= *u~ü*) otherwise.

2. For a listing of the attested forms, and some discussion of their meanings, see Doerfer 1955: 248–62, Weiers 1969: 116–17, 131–59 passim, and Ozawa 1961, esp. 65, 80. As Doerfer points out (p. 248), Vladimirtsov was apparently the first scholar to call attention to possible traces of gender (better termed sex-marking) in Mongolian; but in his lecture of 1925 he mentioned only nominal and adjectival forms, not verbal ones.

3. Hereafter the following abbreviations will be used: HY = the *Hua-i i-yü* of 1389; MM = Middle Mongolian; SH = the *Secret History of the Mongols*; YCPS = *Yüan-ch'ao pi-shih* (the Chinese text-edition upon which our romanized text of the *Secret History* is based).

4. Note use of the sequence *-BA* (written in small capital letters, as in the title of the present article) as covernotation for any or all variant shapes, listed in §2 below, of the *b-* initial past-tense indicative formative. (Strictly speaking this "ending" is not a morpheme, since the elements *-i* and *-y* occur in alternants of several indicative endings in addition to this one, often with morphologically conditioned alternation.) By contrast, the sequence *-bA°* in romanization of Mongolian here represents use of the character 罷 (*ba*^{5}) in the Chinese transcription when this is not followed by a note on the earlier transcription (see below); and simple italic *-bA* represents pronunciations /-ba/ ~/-be/. (The arbitrary symbol ° has no independent significance.)

of the indicative endings, attested in all but the briefest of MM texts, and of very high text-frequency in the SH.[5] Hence it may be hoped that a fuller understanding of the variants of *-BA* will clarify the usage of analogous alternants of the other, less frequent indicative endings. This particular ending is interesting for a second reason as well: transcription of its variants apparently caused some disagreement among the scholars in China who, around 1400, transcribed the hypothetical original text of the *Secret History*—written in the vertical Mongol script—into Chinese characters. Examination of their different transcriptions of variants of *-BA* may somewhat elucidate editorial procedures underlying our present SH text.

2. ALTERNANTS OF *-BA*

On the basis of everything we know about the system of syllabic transcription utilized in the elaborately edited SH text known as the *Yüan-ch'ao pi-shih* it is clear that *-BA* had the following alternate shapes:[6]

-bi, the feminine form. Since /i/ was neutral to vowel harmony, there is only a single phonological shape:

/-bi/ E.g., /bos-bi/ '[she] got up' (2428);[7] /kee-bi/ '[she] said' (1144); /töre-ül-bi/ 'gave birth to' (1071).

-bA, the singular form. The notation represents two vowel-harmonic shapes:

/-ba/ after a back-vowel verb stem: e.g., /a-ba/ '[he] was' (1324); /jolqa-ba/ '[he] met' (1424); /tuu-ba/ '[a bird] alighted' (1435).

/-be/ after a front-vowel verb stem: e.g., /kee-be/ '[he] said' (1214); /ög-be/ '[I] gave' (4227); /gür-be/ '[he] reached' (8193).

-bAy, the plural form. Again, two vowel-harmonic shapes:

-/bay/ after a back-vowel verb stem: e.g., /a-bay/ 'were' (9017); /qono-bay/ '[they] spent the night' (4470); /yabu-bay/ '[our soldiers] moved away' (Y072).

/-bey/ after a front-vowel verb stem (e.g., /ire-bey/ '[we] came' (5048); /ög-bey/ '[they] gave' (3242); /kee-ldü-bey/ '[the two men] agreed' (3260).

Two further points must be raised about alternate shapes of this ending. First, regular vowel harmony is assumed for the masculine and plural forms, though actual writings (discussed below) sometimes show a back-harmony ending after a front-harmony stem. Second, while it is clear that this ending did not take the sort of linking vowel *u~ü* found in many other seemingly consonant-initial endings,[8] there are forms in which such a vowel breaks up

5. *-BA* is three times as frequent as *-JUU*, nearly four times as frequent as the *-(U)lAA*, and nine times as common as *-(U)mU*. The other indicative endings show even fewer occurrences.

6. Forms placed between slant lines are intended to represent phonological shapes of spoken MM; italicized forms, though usually phonemic, represent romanizations that may incorporate some of the idiosyncrasies of the Chinese syllabic transcription (cf. Table 1). Representations of the former sort are used below only when it is crucial to emphasize that phonological shapes are being referred to rather than orthographic ones. Hyphens in either sort of representation show pertinent morpheme divisions.

7. Four-digit numbers (cf. Street 1986: 14) are used to refer to lines of the SH text as represented in the YCPS: the first digit shows the chapter number (with X, Y, Z representing chapters 10, 11, 12), the second and third digits together refer to a folded leaf of that chapter, and the last digit (0–9) reflects one of the columns on that leaf. (Thus line 2159 is the last column on the verso side of leaf 15 of ch. 2.) Such numbering makes it relatively easy to locate a particular passage in the Commercial Press edition of the YCPS, the romanized texts of Haenisch, Shiratori, and de Rachewiltz, and the translation of Cleaves. A nearly identical system was utilized in Kuribayashi 2001.

8. Writings such as *bolubA°* and *bolubay* 'became' for the more common *bolbA°* and *bolbay* (like *boluju* for *bolju*, *boluqaju* for *bolqaju*, etc.) are found in both the HY and early in the SH (prior to line 2026); these simply

a *bb* cluster: scattered through the text are six occurrences of apparent *abubA°* and *abubay*,[9] past tense of *ab-* 'take', as against only two of *abbA°* and *abbay* (5225, Y161). It is not certain which of these alternate spellings more nearly represented the actual pronunciation. Other MM documents are of no help in this matter, since *-BA* apparently never occurs after *ab-* in any of them.[10] The Altan Tobci (a related text known only from a late manuscript of ca. 1700) has always *abuba* and *abubai* for these forms.[11]

At this point the reader might like to see a few of the examples that have led scholars to believe that the alternants of *-BA* reflect sex- and number-marking. Minimally contrasting forms and their translations are shown in boldface type in the passages cited just below. (It might be mentioned, in passing, that in Mongolian a subject may be optionally deleted; hence in many translations, such as those below, an implied subject is placed within square brackets.) More extensive exemplification is supplied in §5 below.

Female vs. male subject. *Tende Alan Qoa eke in-u ügüle-**bi*** 'Then Alan the Fair, their [lit. 'his'] mother, **spoke**' (1125). Cf. *Arqay ire-jü ede üge-s Ciŋgis Qahan-a ügüle-**be*** 'Arqay [a man] came and **spoke** these words to Chinggis Qaan' (6427–28).

Likewise: *Qoaqcin emegen ügüle-rün 'Ger ci oyira bu-yu; Temüjin-i bü-küy-i ügey ese uqa-bi; qoyina-ca bos-uad ire-**bi** bi' kee-**bi*** 'Old woman Qoaqchin spoke: "The tent is nearby, of course," [she] **said**; "[But] whether Temüjin is there or not I didn't notice, [for] I got up and **came** [away] from the back [of the tent]." ' (2453–55). Cf. *'Bi ene üge in-u uqa-n yada-ju qariu in-u yau-ba ese ügüle-be bi; eke-dece asaq-su kee-n ire-**be** bi' kee-**be*** '[Temüjin (later Chinggis Qan)] **said** "I was unable to understand what he said and didn't give him any answer; I **came** to ask [you, my] mother" ' (3309–11).

Singular vs. plural. *Ölös-cü turu-ju ire-**be*** '[Ong Qan] **arrived**, starved and worn out' (5120–21). Cf. *Köü·d deü-ner in-u ügüle-ldü-rün '"Ecige-yin amin in-u abura-ya" kee-n ire-**bAy** bida . . .' kee-ldü-jü qari-bAy* 'His sons and younger brothers conferred, saying "We **came** to save father's life; . . . ," and turned back' (5047–48).

3. TRANSCRIPTIONS OF *-BA*

The writing of alternants of *-BA* in the YCPS is rather complicated; to understand the problem it is necessary to consider the historical process by which the Uighur-script original of the Mongolian text[12] was transformed into the version in the *Yüan-ch'ao pi-shih*. The history of our present text of the *Secret History* was discussed in detail by William Hung in a 1951 article, and has recently been clarified and summarized by Igor de Rachewiltz (2004: xl–liii). Many of the ideas mentioned in §§3.1–3.23 below derive from these two works; but

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illustrate a convention of Chinese sources of the 13th–14th centuries whereby the Chinese syllable *lu* (written with various characters) was used to transcribe *-l-* in foreign names and terms. Our ending quite normally participates in clusters (*töreül-bi, bos-bi, gür-be, ög-be, od-bAy*) rather than requiring a union vowel to break up the cluster.

9. Lines 2078, 2490, 4106, 7434, X219, Y169. All are written with 4-stroke bu^2, not the 2-stroke bu^1 which, when written small, represented syllable-final /b/ (without following vowel).

10. Note also that the phoneme sequence *bb* occurs in the SH solely in the two forms cited above: no other stem in *b* occurs with this indicative ending, *bb* never occurs within a single morpheme, and other *b*-initial endings have an automatic linking vowel.

11. See Vietze 1992: 124 for specific line-references. The Altan Tobci also has *abuba* (line 3508) for the *abua* of SH Y160, and *abubai* (3433, 3621) for SH *ab-uay* (Y033, Y450); this involves a separate problem, mentioned by Ozawa 1961: 62, but still in need of examination.

12. See de Rachewiltz 2004: lxxxix.

all statistics here presented are my own, and are based on the Commercial Press edition of 1936, now conveniently reproduced, with full word- and suffix-indexes, in Kuribayashi 2001.

3.1 Characters used for shapes of -BA

The Chinese syllabic transcription represents different shapes of *-BA* in a variety of ways. Sometimes, as is normal in the YCPS, a single Chinese character is used to represent whatever single Mongolian syllable is involved:[13]

巴 (*ba*^{2}) occurs only twice (1212, 1324), as a representation of the MM syllable /-ba/;
別 (*be*^{1}) occurs eleven times, as a representation of MM /-be/;[14]
畢 (*bi*^{2}) occurs thirty-two times, representing MM /-bi/;
伯 (*bay*^{2}) occurs only once (9017), as a representation of MM /-bay/;
罷 (*ba*^{5}) occurs hundreds of times, and may apparently represent any of the variant shapes of *-BA* (except perhaps /-bi/).

Very often, however, shapes of this ending are represented by a sequence of characters: 15-stroke *ba*^{5} plus an editorial note, usually consisting of three characters, which tells us that this *ba*^{5} was a later substitution for some earlier character. Such notes—unique in the YCPS text—accompany 510 of the 1114 occurrences of *ba*^{5}, and usually read as follows:

原作八 'originally written *ba*^{1}' (occurs only once, in X146)
原作巴 'originally written *ba*^{2}' (two occurrences: 3444, 4037)[15]
原作別 'originally written *be*^{1}' (217 occurrences covering 220 forms; see below)
原作伯 'originally written *bay*^{2}' (287 occurrences; = /-bay/ or /-bey/)

Three exceptional cases may be mentioned. (1) Sometimes a three-character note is shortened by omission of the second character; this was apparently done (e.g., in lines X237, Y233, Z578) to save space in an already crowded text-column. (2) Normally a note immediately follows the character *ba*^{5}. But if the latter is followed by an enclitic particle (*gü*, *je*; e.g., 3349, 6272) and hence is not word-final, the note is usually placed after the particle rather than before, and reads 罷原作別 or the like: '[the character] *ba*^{5} [was] originally written *be*^{1}'. (3) In one sole instance (X264) we find a still longer note after the last of four instances of /tüši-be/ occurring in three successive columns: 'the above [instances of] *ba*^{5} [were] all originally written *be*^{1}'.

It is noteworthy that of the 604 occurrences of *ba*^{5} that are not covered by an editorial note (and which are here romanized as *-bA°*), 201 occur in chapters 1 and 2 of the YCPS. This seems to indicate that such notes were added to the text only after these first chapters had already been inscribed on printing blocks (Hung 1951: 455); see §3.23 below.

Some of these statistics are summarized in Table 1; see also Table 2 in §5.4.

13. In parentheses after each character is one of the "mechanical transliterations" of Hattori 1973: 40–44 (which is in effect an English résumé of Appendix 1 of a 1946 article). I write Hattori's *be* as *be*^{1} in order to distinguish the character-identifying transliteration from the Mongolian syllable /be/.

14. Lines 1214, 2020, 2029, 2211, 2336, 2438, 5136, 8193, X299, and also 7368, X297. The last two occurrences show sequences *-be*^{1}*-yu*^{1}*-u*^{1} and *-be*^{1}*-yiu*^{1} respectively (representing *-BA* plus the interrogative particle), which must be interpreted as standing for the plural /-bey/ variant plus /-ü/ rather than /-be/ plus /-yü/ (see Street 2008), hence in both cases /üje-bey-ū/ 'did you [pl.] see [him/them]?', vs. the singular found, for example, in the /ükü-be-ü/ 'did [he] die?' of 2020, 2029 (= *-be*^{1}*-u*^{1}). Note also the unique writing of /-bay/ by means of the 15-stroke *ba*^{5} character (with no note) plus *yiu*^{1} in *ajira-bay-ū* 'have [they] gone?' in 2498.

15. In 4037 the Pao-Palladius manuscript has a note stating that the original writing was *bay*^{2} rather than the 4-stroke *ba*^{2} shown in the Ku manuscript printed in the Commercial Press edition. The *ba*^{2} seems preferable.

Table 1. Frequency of characters used in the YCPS to represent shapes of past-tense *-BA*

Character involved, with its romanization and phonological equivalent	Occurrences when character written alone (with no note)	Occurrences when character specified in a note to 罷 (*ba*^{5})	Total
八 (*ba*^{1}) = *-ba* = /ba/	0	1	1
巴 (*ba*^{2}) = *-ba* = /ba/	5	2	7
別 (*be*^{1}) = *-be* = /be/	11[16]	220[17]	231
畢 (*bi*^{2}) = *-bi* = /bi/	32	0	32
伯 (*bay*^{2}) = *-bAy* = /bay/~/bey/	1	287	288
罷 (*ba*^{5}) = *-bA°* = /ba/~/be/ or apparently /bay/~/bey/	604[18]	0	604
Total:	653	510	1163

3.2 Stages in the editing of the YCPS

During the Yüan dynasty the Chinese were expressly forbidden to learn the language of their Mongol rulers (de Rachewiltz 1965: 203, Hung 1951: 458). Shortly after the end of Mongol rule in 1368, the government of the Ming, in order to deal more effectively with their troublesome northern neighbors, determined to train Chinese students in the language and culture of the Mongols.

> . . . the College of Literature [first] prepared a basic Sino-Mongolian glossary with the Mongol words given in phonetic transcription, followed by a reader consisting of twelve official documents in Mongolian, interlinearly transcribed and translated into Chinese. . . . The work was published in 1389 under the title of *Hua-i i-yü*. . . . (de Rachewiltz 2004: xlv–xlvi).

Seeking supplementary reading matter for students, the scholars settled on the text that has come down to us as the *Yüan-ch'ao pi-shih* or *Secret History of the Mongols*. This was a much longer text, and presented the editors with many more problems. Editorial work continued, it seems, into the early 1400s, but had been completed by 1408 (de Rachewiltz 2004: l–li).

Thanks to the above-mentioned editorial note on *ba*^{5} it is clear that three stages must be distinguished in the editorial processes that resulted in a completed SH text, syllabically transcribed by means of Chinese characters and segmented (by bracketing of transcription characters) for inclusion of a Chinese gloss to the right of each Mongolian word or morpheme. These stages must have resulted in (at least) three more or less complete drafts of the Mongolian text, referred to below as drafts α, β, and γ.[19] All these drafts, like the HY, presumably represented Mongolian words solely by means of Chinese characters, the Uighur-script original which in the very earliest draft may well have remained next to the Chinese transcription-characters having in all likelihood been removed.

16. Includes two instances (7368, X297) where the 7-stroke *be*^{1} character, together a second *y*-initial one, represents /-bey/ before the interrogative particle.

17. Includes four instances of the 15-stroke character that are covered by a single note (X264) stating that all four were earlier written with the 7-stroke *be*^{1} character.

18. Includes one instance (2498) where the 15-stroke *ba*^{5} character (with no note: *-bA°*), together with a second *y*-initial one, represents /-bay/ before the interrogative particle.

19. Ignored here are editing procedures and drafts that eventuated in the Chinese translations appearing in the YCPS: the literal interlinear translation, and the freer summarizing translation inserted between sections of the Mongol text. For these, see de Rachewiltz 2004: xl–liii.

3.21 Draft α. With a few notable exceptions (e.g., transcription of syllable-final *-l*, and the punctuation discussed in §3.24 below), draft α utilized conventions similar to, if not identical with, those employed in the HY. These included the following:

(a) Characters used to transcribe Mongolian were chosen almost exclusively for their phonetic values, though in a few cases the choice of characters reflected their semantic values as well. For example, in the HY the first syllable of *bari-* 'seize, take, hold' was written with 把 (*ba*^{3}) 'seize, hold'—a character including the "hand" radical—rather than with simple 巴 (*ba*^{2}).

(b) Variants of *-BA* were represented solely by means of single characters. In the HY we find: 別 representing the /be/ shape of *-BA* (10 instances); 巴 for the /ba/ shape (3 instances); 八 for either /ba/ (15) or /be/ (3 times, after a front-vowel stem);[20] 伯 for either /bay/ (4) or /bey/ (3 times, after a front-vowel stem).

The HY shows no instance of the /bi/ variant of *-BA*; and neither 畢 (*bi*^{2}) nor 罷 (*ba*^{5}) was ever used as a transcription character. If the feminine *bi* variant had occurred in the text, it would probably have been written with 必 (*bi*^{1}), since in the HY this is the sole means of representing the Mongolian syllable /bi/.

3.22 Draft β. After completion of draft α, it must have been decided to incorporate many more mnemonic aids into the transcription. There was, as Hung put it (1951: 454),

> an almost consistent attempt to choose or even to fabricate those characters which would suggest the category of meaning of the Mongolian word. If it is a mountain or a river, the transcription contains a character with the "mountain" or "water" sign. . . . If a device is needed to bring forth a rather complex meaning, the transcriber might even string characters together in the form of a phrase.

For example, /nicügün/, glossed as 'stark naked', was always written with three transcription characters (*ni*^{1}*-cu*^{1}*-gun*^{3}) which not only represented the sound of the Mongolian word but also, in Chinese, meant 'you without pants'.

At least one of the new mnemonic aids in draft β involved past-tense *-BA*, and its use eventually turned out to have serious repercussions. Someone went through the text and changed all four of the characters 八, 巴, 別, and 伯 to 罷 (*ba*^{5}) in those cases where one of these transcribed *-BA*; in Chinese this *ba*^{5} had perfective meaning ('cease, finish; finished'), so appropriate for the past-tense ending. Such substitution must have been a tedious task, and it was not perfectly accomplished: left in the text were seventeen instances of the older writings.[21]

While draft α is entirely hypothetical, draft β is not: it is represented by chapter 1 of our present YCPS text, and most of chapter 2 (see below). Apparently these first two had been inscribed on printing blocks before further revision was made in preparation for draft γ, which is represented by chapters 3–12 of the present text.

If we may assume that the feminine /bi/ shape of *-BA* was written in draft α by the HY's usual character for the syllable /be/, then this 必 (*bi*^{1}) was replaced in β by 畢 (*bi*^{2}), which

20. E.g., /ög-be/ 'gave' is written either with two-stroke *ba*^{1} or with 7-stroke *be*^{1}; see Mostaert 1995: 37. Kuribayashi 2003: 172 lists locations of these and other alternants in the HY.

21. Earlier *be*^{1} = /-be/, nine times (1214, 2020*, 2029*, 2211*, 2336, 2438, 5136*, 8193*, X299), plus twice *be*^{1}*+yu*^{1}*+u*^{1} or *be*^{1}*+yiu*^{1} = /-bey-ü/ (7368*, X297*). Earlier *ba*^{2} = /-ba/, five times (1212, 1324, 1326, 1424, 1435). Earlier *bay*^{2}, once (9017*). In eight of these passages (marked with an asterisk above) the *-BA* occurred before a particle or full word in the same bracket-group; hence the character that should have been replaced was not as obvious to the eye as when it occurred immediately before a blank space.

like *ba*^{5} could mean 'end, finish' in Chinese. Whether this replacement—if that is what it was—was consistently carried out we cannot know. But if we could assume that some instances of original 必 (*bi*^{1}) were accidentally replaced by *ba*^{5} rather than the new 畢 (*bi*^{2}), this would explain the somewhat erratic use of the feminine form even in chapters 1 and 2 of our present version of the text. (E.g., we would expect /-bi/ in the second of eight instances of *unu-bA°* within three lines, 2434–37.)

3.23 Draft γ. Preparation of the initial draft α, with preliminary transcription of the Mongolian into Chinese characters and addition of glossing brackets, must have crucially involved one or more fluent speakers of Mongolian with scholarly credentials. The new mnemonic aids introduced into draft β, however, are more likely to have been the work of some non-Mongol editor who was interested primarily in language pedagogy.[22] For while the changes in transcribing *-BA* might be of help to Chinese students learning Mongolian, they obliterated the formal distinction between what we are tentatively calling the singular and the plural forms of this tense-ending.[23]

The only editing which we can be certain occurred between drafts β and γ involved an attempt to remedy the problem introduced into draft β by use of the 罷 (*ba*^{5}) character. Someone went through the text of chapters 3–12[24] and—for some unknown reason—added editorial notes (§3.1 above) concerning the characters used earlier at each occurrence rather than simply replacing the offending *ba*^{5}.

Before draft γ was completed, however, blocks for the first two leaves of chapter 2 must have been found defective in some way, and were recut after notes had been added for three instances of *ba*^{5}. (The fact that the spacing of characters on these leaves is less adequate than on those before and after also indicates such recutting.) Hence the text at the start of chapter 2 represents draft γ rather than β.

Draft γ, probably completed by about 1405 (de Rachewiltz 2004: xlix–li), was what may be called the Urtext of the YCPS as we know it today: the latest common ancestor of both the twelve-chapter version, first made conveniently available by the Commercial Press photolithographic edition of 1936 (which incorporated forty-one leaves from early fifteenth-century printed edition into the Ku certified copy of about 1805) and a fifteen-chapter version found in the Yung-lo ta-tien and the Pao-Palladius manuscript.

3.24 Spacing as punctuation. Among transcriptional practices introduced in draft α of the YCPS text was use of spacing between Chinese characters as punctuation of the

22. Hung 1951: 461, with reference to this addition of mnemonic aids, says "It is possible that some of the [Chinese] students undertook the revision under the supervision of the masters."

23. Hung, ibid., 461, apparently unaware of the semantic distinction between the *-bA°* and *-bAy* alternants, attributes the addition of notes regarding "original" writings to unhappiness with the broken vowel harmony caused by the new mnemonic writings. This seems unlikely, considering that the vertical Uighur/Mongol script wrote the syllables /-be/ and /-ba/ with the same letters. Further, the YCPS contains other instances of back-harmonic suffixes after front-harmonic stems: writings such as *ire-asu* (1405), *ire-tuqay* (2015), *ög-uya* (5197), *hüsü-ban* (7432) were left in the text without alteration. Hence it must have been loss of the formal distinction between singular and plural shapes of *-BA* that was thought sufficiently undesirable to warrant a major revision in the form of added notes.

24. Hung, ibid., 461 suggested that this replacement was made by "working backward from the end to the beginning" of the text, but that this work was abandoned before the job was completed. But I see no evidence for this hypothesis, and it seems more likely that the systematic work began at the start of chapter 3 (prior chapters having presumably been already cut onto blocks), and continued to the end of the text: notes were added at sixty-six percent of the points where they should have been in chapters 3–7, but at only forty-four percent of such points in chapters 8–12.

Mongolian text.[25] Spaces of two different sizes—call them minor and major spaces—were introduced between certain words of the Mongolian text; a space about as large as an average-sized transcription character would represent a minor speech-pause (and a minor syntactic break), while a space at least twice as large would stand for a more important pause-point and a major syntactic division. Both types of space could appear either after or within a sentence, though a minor space is more common inside a sentence, a major one at sentence-end. (A minor space at sentence-end generally indicated paratactic connection of that sentence with the one following.)

While these conventions would certainly have been helpful to a student attempting to read the text aloud, they were difficult to implement initially, and problematic for later editors and copyists. It was no easy task, at the outset, to arrange into columns of fixed length the characters representing a long Mongolian sentence—consisting of words that varied in length from one to at least eight syllables; not easy if transcription characters were to be kept roughly the same size in successive columns of the text, and if blank space anywhere in a column had to be controlled for size. A later copyist, unless absolutely meticulous at every minute of his work, could scarcely avoid making slight changes in the relative position of contiguous transcription characters. When an editor replaced one character by another, slight distortion of the earlier spacing was often inevitable; and if one added or deleted a word near the start of a section, either the spacing of that single column would become monstrously distorted or all subsequent columns of the section had to be formatted anew.

The replacement of one character by a different one need not have caused problems if, as in modern printed text, all characters were of identical height. But in the style of calligraphy utilized for transcription characters in the HY and YCPS, characters differed notably in height: a simple element such as 八 or 兀 typically occupied only about two-thirds as much vertical space as a truly complex one; 罷 (*ba*^{5}) was typically about fifty percent taller than 巴 (*ba*^{2}), and 畢 (*bi*^{2}) could be twice the height of 必 (*bi*^{1}).

The last point means that when, in preparation of draft β, the mnemonically helpful *ba*^{5} and *bi*^{2} were put into the text, these occupied more vertical space than the simpler characters they replaced: the extra space needed had to be borrowed from some major or minor space in the same column. These and other analogous replacements thus meant that the clear spacing-as-punctuation in hypothetical draft α was somewhat distorted already in draft β.

The addition in draft γ of notes showing "original" writings for *-BA*—presumably the writings used in draft α—threw the spacing-as-punctuation into chaos. In some portions of the text of chapters 3–12 (in the twelve-chapter YCPS) one can still see remnants of the original spacing contrasts of draft α, and if one understands the system implied by chapters 1–2 it is sometimes possible to reconstruct specifics of the spacing in certain lines or sections of later chapters. But such spacing is of little or no help to the reader. The Chinese editors must have realized as much as editing drew to a close; the distinction between major and minor spaces was altogether abandoned in the fifteen-chapter version, with that between close-spacing and minor space often blurred as well.

4. THE TEMPORAL AND ASPECTUAL MEANING OF *-BA*

Middle Mongolian had three indicative endings with past-tense meaning. Discussion of the semantic contrasts between these three is beyond the scope of the present article; here a few remarks will suffice concerning the single ending with which we are concerned, since

25. See Street 1986 and 1987. This use of spacing is not found in the somewhat earlier HY.

the temporal/aspectual meaning common to all alternants of *-BA* is quote straightforward—and certainly less complicated than the uses of *-(U)lAA* and *-JUU.*

In over eighty-five percent of its occurrences, *-BA*—in any of its alternants—is a simple past tense, referring to some activity as a single action that took place at some point in the past. It is most common in straightforward narrative passages, such as those reproducing the back-and-forth of conversation, or relating a sequence of historical events. *'Eke, öter bos' kee-bi. Höelün eke ügüle-rün 'Köü·d-i öter seri-ül-üdkün' kē-ed Höelün eke öter gü bos-bi. Temüjin-te·n köü·d öterle-n gü bos-uad mori·d-iyan bari-ju Temüjin niken mori unu-bA°. Höelün eke niken mori unu-bA°. . . . Temülün-i Höelün eke ebür-tür-iyen deür-be; niken mori kötöl jasa-bA°; Börte Üjin-e mori duta-bA°* '[Old Qoaqchin said] "Mother, get up quick!" Höelün said "Get the boys up fast!," and rose in haste. After the sons including Temüjin had also got up, [they] grabbed their horses and Temüjin mounted one; Höelün mounted a horse. . . . [Six others *unu-bA°* 'mounted a horse'.] As for [young] Temülün, Höelün had her ride in front of her. [They] prepared one horse as a spare. There was no horse [left] for Lady Börte' (2428–39).

When such a sentence with *-BA* is embedded in another that ends with any of the past-tense endings, it represents an event that was already completed in the past, and hence requires a translation with 'had' plus a past participle: *Ciŋgis Qahan-i qan bol-qa-bAy kee-n Kereyi·d-ün Tooril Qan-tur Daqay Sügegey qoyar-i elci ilē-bAy* '[He] sent Daqay and Sügegey as envoys to Tooril Qan of the Kereyid with the message that [they] had made Chinggis Qaan [their] qan' (3501–2; lit. 'sent . . . saying that . . .').

In most other cases, the *-BA* is better translated into English by what in traditional grammar was called the perfect tense: a form of *have* plus a past participle. Here the ending refers either to an action that took place in the recent past, or to the present-time result of such an action. Such perfective use of *-BA*, in the clearest instances, is marked by occurrence of *edöe* 'now' in the main clause. E.g., *Bi ber edöe ötöl-bA°* 'I have grown old' (5361; lit. 'As for myself, now I got old'). Once there is overt contrast between 'now' and 'formerly': *'Urida ene Juŋdu altan qan-u-ay a-juu je. Edöe Ciŋgis qaan-u-ay bol-bA°je* 'Formerly this [city of] Jungdu indeed belonged to Altan Qan; [but] now it is certainly Chinggis Qaan's' (Y165–67; lit. 'now it indeed became Chinggis Qaan's'). Such contrast can be stated in other ways, e.g., by use of a different past tense ending in the prior sentence: *Soqor elci-yen ilē-esü ašgi-ju yabuqan ilē-jüü. Edöe bi irge-ben quyi-ra ire-be* 'When I sent my messenger Soqor [to you], you beat him and sent him back on foot; now I have come [myself] to request the return of my people' (X341–43). Similarly: *Öcigen niken-te biljiur qodolid-uqsan-i teyin gü buli-ju ab-ulaa. Edöe basa teyin gü buli-bA°* 'Once [recently they] snatched [from us] a lark [we'd] shot with a knob-headed arrow. Now again [they] have taken [something from us] in just the same way' (2092–93). Further instances including *edöe* may be found in lines 2221, 2350, 2490, 5260, 5306, 8193, Y086.

But often there is no overt indication of this secondary, perfective-present usage of *-BA*. E.g., *Hon qalaun bol-bA°* 'The weather has become hot' (Y433; lit. 'The year became hot'; part of a message sent by Chinggis Qaan from his summer quarters). Likewise: *. . . jügergen usu Toluy köün uu-bAy. Qorom sau-ju ügüle-rün 'Soqta-bA° bi' . . . kee-ed . . .* '. . . Prince Toluy drank the magic potion. [Then] he sat for a moment and said "I have become drunk"' (Z244–45; lit. 'I became drunk'); *Dayin gür-bAy* 'The enemy has arrived' (6023, 6024). In such cases the correct interpretation of the ending on the part of a hearer or reader is based on pragmatic rather than specifically semantic grounds.

In some cases, of course, either translation into English is equally acceptable: *Aqa deü-yi bara-bA°. Qara Kida·d-tur ba oro-bA° gü. Ulus ba joba-a-mu. Edöe eün-i ker ki-kü·n bida*

'[Our elder brother the Qan] destroyed his brothers; he even submitted to the Qara Kitad; and he makes his people suffer. Now how are we to treat him?' (5131–33; alternatively—as de Rachewiltz 2004: 74—'has destroyed his brothers and has even submitted . . .'). Similarly *Yaun bol-bi?* 'What happened?' or 'What has happened?' (Z220; see the next-to-last paragraph of §5.1 below).

Lastly, in a few passages *-BA* in effect reflects the present result of a recent action.[26] For these, de Rachewiltz 2004 uses the present tense in translation, as shown in the following examples. (The literal translations are those of the present writer.) *Edöe ire-gü caq bol-bA°; qorum·ud gülice* 'Now is about the time of his coming; wait a little!' (1197–98, de Rachewiltz 2004: 6; lit. 'Now the time [for him] to come has arrived . . .'). */Morin unuata·n /modun nemüre-te·n bol-bAy te·de* 'They are those /Who have [but] a horse as a mount, /Who have [but] a tree as a shelter' (6171, de Rachewiltz 2004: 94; lit. 'these have become those having . . .'). *Yisügey baatur-i ükü-be-ū kee-jü* . . . 'You say to yourselves that Yisügei Ba'atur is dead . . .' (2019–20, de Rachewiltz 2004: 16; lit. 'saying that Yisügey Baatar has died . . .'). *Teŋgeri-de ese taala-qda-bA° bida* 'We are not loved by Heaven!' (4359, de Rachewiltz 2004: 64; lit. 'We have not been loved by Heaven'). *Ciŋgis qaan-u nere aldar sonos-cu ayu-ju ala-ay ba. Edöe sülder-tü beye cin-u gür-cü ire-gde-jü sülder-ece ayu-bA°.* 'Hearing of Činggis Qa'an's fame we were in awe [of you]. Now your august person has arrived, you have come to us, and we are [indeed] awed by your majesty' (Y084–86, de Rachewiltz 2004: 117; lit. '. . . [we] have feared your majesty').

5. USAGE OF THE ALTERNANTS OF *-BA*

The following sections will examine the actual uses of the forms *-bi*, *-bA* (= /-ba/~/-be/), and *-bAy* (= /-bay/~/bey/). Instances of /-ba/ and /-be/ that are written unambiguously are discussed in §5.2, writings with ambiguous *-bA°* in §5.4.

5.1 Uses of /-bi/

This feminine alternant occurs only thirty-two times in the *Secret History*, written with 畢. In twenty-two of the twenty-eight instances where the sentence has an overt subject, that subject does in fact refer to a single female human. These subjects are of the following sorts:

(a) The pronoun *bi* 'I' used by a woman (*Qoaqcin emegen* 'old Qoaqchin' 2454, 2455).

(b) A single name: *Alan Qoa* 'Alan Qoa' (with *töre-ül-bi* 'gave birth to' 1071, 1104; *kee-bi* 'said' 1144).

(c) A longer sequence including a name: *Alan Qoa eke in-u* 'his mother, Alan Qoa' (with *ügüle-bi* 'spoke' 1125); *Alan Qoa eke an-u* (with *ügey bol-bi* 'died' 1145). Also *Temülün nere-tey niken ökin* 'a daughter named Temülün' (with *töre-bi* 'was born' 1414–15); *Qoaqcin emegen* 'old Qoaqchin' (with *kee-bi* 'said' 2425–28, 2449–51, 2453–55, 2468). Similarly *Höelün eke* 'Mother Höelün' (with *öter gü bos-bi* 'also got up quickly' 2432), *Üjin eke* 'Lady Mother [Höelün]' (with *kee-bi* in 2082–86; with *mawula-bi* 'rebuked' 2111–27), *Sölsü-tey töre-gsen Üjin eke* 'Lady Mother [Höelün], born brave' (with *tejie-bi* 'reared [her sons]' 2059–61), and *Yisüy qadun* 'Yisüy Qatun' (with *yeke-de sewürel-bi* 'heaved a great sigh' in 5249–50). *Yisügen qadun* 'Yisügen Qatun' occurs with *kee-bi* in 5225–29, but with *kee-be* in 5232–34 (with another *kee-be* intervening, and referring to Chinggis Qaan), seemingly indicating that the use of *-bi* is optional rather than obligatory with a female subject.

26. Comrie 1976: 56, refers to this as "the prefect of result," wherein "a present state is referred to as being the result of some past situation."

(d) A descriptive phrase: *Ene eke bidan-u* 'this mother of ours' (with *töre-ül-bi* 1110–11 'gave birth to'); *tere dumda keeli-tey eme* 'that women who was mid-way through pregnancy' (with *köüle-bi* 'bore a son' 1235); *tere eme* 'that woman' (with *töre-ül-bi* 1244); likewise *mün öesün* 'the same one, herself' (with *dōro sau-bi* 'took a lower seat' 5239).

In two or three further cases, where the *-bi* verb lacks an overt subject, context clearly implies that a woman is referred to. These are in lines 1126 (*E·de qurban köü·d-i töre-ül-bi* '[She = our mother] gave birth to these four sons') and 5229 (*Edöe maqa ene bodulqan-tur qaaqši yorci-bi?* 'Where might [she = my sister] have gone now, in all this confusion?'). In line 2029 the implied subject of *bol-bi* is presumably 'we', i.e., the two ladies Örbey and Soqatay.

The remaining seven instances of a verb with *-bi* would certainly be exceptions to any strict rule of subject-verb agreement, but may perhaps reflect other aspects of the linguistic and cultural context.

In two cases it seems possible that use of this feminine alternant of *-BA*—even when the overt subject refers to plural males or an inanimate entity—seems triggered by occurrence, within the subject nominal, of a modifier consisting of a woman's name plus the genitive ending. *Qadun-u bidan-u Gürbesü-yin jasaq qurca bol-bi* 'The rule of Gürbesü, our queen, has become harsh' (7106–7). And: *Eke Üjin-ü /qaliyarsun maŋgirsun-iyar tejie-gse·d köü·d /qa·d bol-ura gür-bi* 'Mother [Höelün] Üjin's /sons who were fed on wild lily [bulbs] /succeeded in becoming rulers' (2061–62). Just possibly the following sentence might reflect this same pattern: *Noqa·n-u bidan-u quca-quy dawun mawuy bol-bi* 'The sound of our dogs' barking has turned nasty' (7100–7101; tr. de Rachewiltz 2004: 111). Here "our" refers either to men or to both men and women; but the *noqa·n* 'dogs', as I once suggested on other grounds (Street 1990: 373), may perhaps be an old feminine plural (of *noqay*), contrasting with the other plural, *noqa·s* (9014, 9018; written *noqa‹y›s* in 7335, 7337, 7344).

In a few instances, however, this feminine form is unquestionably used after a subject referring to a male human, and containing no mention of a woman. I suspect that in one case this implies a feminine weakness in a man. In §272 of the SH, Ögödey Qaan falls ills, loses his speech, and is in great distress. Eventually he comes to, opens his eyes, and asks for water; he then manages to say *Yaun bol-bi?* 'What happened?' (Z220). Literally this would be either 'What feminine [weakness] has come to be?' or 'What have [I, weak as a woman] become?'. A longer passage in §194, filled with sarcasm, may illustrate a similar transferred meaning of this ending. De Rachewiltz translates it as follows (2004: 117–18, 702); asterisks have been added to show where *-bi* occurs.

> 'Your father Inanča Bilge Qan never showed a man's back or a gelding's rump to an enemy that was his match. Now you, how can you lose heart when it is [still so] early in the morning? Had we known that you would have lost courage in this manner, shouldn't we have brought your mother Gürbesü, even though she is [only] a woman, and given her command of the army? What a pity, alas, that Kökse'ü Sabraq should have become [so] old! The discipline in our army has grown* lax! [This] is, surely, the [favourable] time and the destiny of the Mongols [decreed by Heaven and Earth]. We are finished*! Ah, weakling Tayang, it looks as if you are quite powerless.'

The pertinent sentences are: *Cerig-ün bidan-u jasal sülbergüy bol-bi. Moŋqol-un caq jayaan bu-y je. Ese bol-bi.* (7297–98; de Rachewiltz tells us the Chinese gloss for *ese bolbi* is 'it is of no avail' or 'it's no good'.) Probably the first *-bi* reinforces *sülbergüy* 'lax' by imputing a feminine weakness to the subject 'the discipline of our army'; while that in the two-word sentence is in effect '[this ineffectual situation] has not become [favorable to us]', i.e., 'we cannot succeed'.

Lastly, there is one unambiguous passage where *-bi* is used of a man: *Tende-ce ügüle-rün 'Temüjin ger-tür bu-yu-ū? Ger kejie bu-yu?' kee-bi* 'Then [he = the soldier (*cerig haran*)] asked [old Qoaqchin] "Is Temüjin at [his] tent? Where is the tent?" ' (2452–53). This sentence is sandwiched between two statements by the old woman, each ending in *kee-bi*, and is addressed to her; one suspects that a copyist wrongly wrote *-bi* again here in place of the expected *-be*.

5.2 Uses of unambiguously written -bA (= /-ba/~/-be/)

The unambiguously written form *-ba* = /-ba/ appears only eight times in the *Secret History*, after back-vowel stems. In chapter 1 it is written five times with 4-stroke 巴; in later chapters, with 罷 (*-bA*[5]) plus a note that 巴 (3444, 4037) or 2-stroke 八 (X146) had been written there earlier. By contrast, the form /-be/ occurs 229 times in our text, after front-vowel stems. Nine times it is written with the 7-stroke 別;[27] in all other cases with 罷 plus a note that 別 was the older writing.

5.21 Uses of unambiguous -ba. In six of its eight occurrences this /-ba/ occurs in sentences with a single male human as subject: e.g., *Qamuq Moŋqol-i Qabul Qahan mede-n a-ba* 'Qabul Qaan ruled over all the Mongols' (1324). Similar subjects are *Ambaqay Qahan* (also with *qamuq Moŋqol-i mede-n a-ba*, 1325–26), and in indirect discourse *Deüben Taycar-i ala-qda-ba kee-n . . .* 'because [lit. 'saying that'] his brother Taychar had been killed' (4037). We also find three passages with similar implied subjects: *Yisügey Baatur* (with *jolqa-ba* 1424), *Buqu Qatagi* (with *ese doŋqod-ba* 'didn't answer' in 1212), and *Quduqa Beki* (with *oro-ul-ba* 'made [them] submit' X146).

The occurrence in line 1434–35 is unique in having a non-human animate subject: *Caqān šiŋqor naran sara qoyar-i ad-qu-n nis-[c]u ire-jü qar deere min-u tuu-ba* '[In my dream] a white gerfalcon flew down to me holding the sun and moon [in its claws], and alighted on my hand'.

This leaves one truly aberrant occurrence of *-ba*, at the crucial point in the narrative where Temüjin is elected *qan* (see de Rachewiltz 2004: 49–50, 457–62). §123 of the SH begins as follows: 'Altan, Quchar and Sacha Beki, all of them having agreed among themselves, said to Temüǰin, "We shall make you *qan*." ' There follow thirteen lines of poetry, in which *ba* 'we' occurs four times. Then: *Edüy üge bara-ldu-ju eyin aman alda-ju Temüjin-i Ciŋgis Qahan kee-n nereyi[d]-cü qan bol-qa-ba.* De Rachewiltz translates (2004: 49–50): 'Thus they pledged their word and in this way they swore the oath [of loyalty], and made Temuǰin *qan*, naming him Činggis Qa'an'. But the terminal *-ba* implies a singular subject, and perhaps we should assume a shift in subject, as is common in sentences with *-ju* converbs: 'Together pledging [their *or* our] word thus, and in this way swearing the oath [of loyalty], [the assembly] made Temüjin *qan*, naming him Chinggis Qaan' (3443–44). Or perhaps the singular simply emphasizes unanimity amongst multiple participants in an action.

However this may be, in seven of its eight occurrences *-ba* definitely occurs with a singular non-female subject.

5.22 Uses of unambiguous -be. The unambiguously written form *-be* = /-be/ appears 229 times in the *Secret History*, after front-vowel stems. In thirteen instances it is not entirely clear whether the subject (unstated in six) should be counted as singular or plural; the translations of Cleaves and de Rachewiltz sometimes disagree (e.g., lines 4232, 8245), and sometimes the implied subject is so vague that a passive translation seems most appropriate (see §5.324).

27. See n. 14 above for these nine, and for two additional passages where *be*[1] writes part of the /-bey/ alternant.

Of the remaining 216 occurrences, 211 appear to have a singular subject, only five a plural one. Of the 211, 198 apparently have a single male human as subject, overt or implied. The clear and overt subjects among these, twice as numerous as those that must be deduced from context, include the following types.

(a) A pronoun: there are nineteen instances of a man's using the pronoun *bi*, and ten involving *ci* 'you (sg.)'. The former is used by Temüjin (3309–11, 7147–48, and often) both before and after he begins to be referred to as Chinggis Qaan, and by his successor Ögödey (Z578), as well as by others of lower status. The accusative *cima-yi* 'you' occurs once as a subject in indirect discourse (with *ire-be* 6272); the simple *ci* nine times as subject in direct quotation of speech.

(b) A man's name, with or without other words; there are some ninety-eight instances. E.g., *Qasar yeki-be* 'what has Qasar done?' (X299); *Caaday lu ügüle-be* 'It's Chaaday who has said [it]' (Y298); *Mönŋlig ecige Temüjin-i ab-cu ire-be* 'Father Mönglig brought Temüjin back [with him]' (2015); *Buri Bökö ülü ilaq-da-qu güün una-ju ög-be* 'Buri Bökö, the invincible, let himself be toppled' (4273–74). Similarly, subjects *Yisügey Baatur anda min-u* 'my sworn friend Yisügey Baatur' (5356–57), *Ciŋgis Qahan öesün* 'Chinggis Qaan himself' (7016–17), *Alaquš Digid Quri-yin ilē-gsen Yuqunan elci . . .* 'the envoy Yuqunan sent by Alaqush Digid Quri' (7151–52).

(c) Some other sort of nominal referring to a male human: *Ere bi ötöl-be* 'I, [her] husband, have become old' (7102), *qahan* 'the Qaan [= Ögödey]' (with *kee-be* Z315–29). Also *Ciqurqu-da talbi-qsan qaraul-aca güün* 'a man from the observation [post we] had established at Chiqurqu' (4339–41).

All in all then, 130 of the 139 overt, singular subjects refer to a male human. Of the residue, six such subjects refer to an individual woman: *Höelün eke* (with *deür-be* 2438 and *tejiye-be* 3331), *Börte Üjin* (with *kee-be* 3311–17), and *Yisügen qadun* (with *kee-be* 5232–34). There are also *tere eme güün* 'that woman' (with *kee-be* 4460–64), and *ci* in a sentence spoken by Chinggis Qaan and addressed to Tayang Qan's daughter Gürbesü, 7443–44). Lastly, there are a few miscellaneous singular subjects. *Dotora nidün min-u geyi-be* 'my inner vision has cleared up' (4407; i.e., his consciousness had returned [cf. de Rachewiltz 2004: 530]); *urqu-quy naran-aca šiŋge-küy naran-tur gür-tele nere min-u gür-be je* 'my fame has indeed passed from sunrise to sunset' (8192–93; i.e., has declined [de Rachewiltz 2004: 751]); *Yeke oro yeüd-ge-küy caq-uu gür-be* 'Is it that the time has arrived [for] change [of] the great throne?' (Y170).

Finally, we must consider the few passages in which *-be* clearly has a plural subject. It is remarkable—and surely significant—that in four of the five the subject refers to a pair of individuals or tribes acting in concert, almost as a single entity: *Baday Kišiliq qoyar ügülerün . . . kee-be* 'Baday and Kišilig spoke, saying . . .' (5507–9);[28] *Qaliudar Caqurqan qoyar Ciŋgis Qahan-a ügüle-rün . . . kee-be* 'Qaliudar and Caqurqan spoken to Chinggis Qaan, saying . . . (6504–7); *Boorcu Muqali . . . ene oron-tur gür-ge-be* '[You] Bo'orchu and Muqali . . . caused me to gain this throne' (8379–81); and *Basa Ünji·n Saqayi·d niken güreen ire-be gü* 'The Ünjin and the Saqayid came also, [as] one camp' (3412–13). The sole exception is this: *Ceri·üd man-u bügüd-be* (Y420–21). De Rachewiltz 2004: 191 translates 'Our troops are completely assembled', but it is tempting to think that perhaps two or three disparate groups of men were combined into a single army. (The noun *cerig* is usually 'army', while the plural is usually 'soldiers', as in 2461 et seq.)

28. But in the prior sentence *Baday Kišiliq qoyar* occurs with a plural *ög-bAy*.

5.23 Summary. From the above it is clear that the unambiguously written endings *-ba* = /-ba/ and *-be* = /-be/ are used almost exclusively with singular subjects, and primarily with reference to a single human being, most commonly male. It is notable that the aberrant usage mentioned at the end of §5.21 can be interpreted in the same way as at least four of the five exceptional instances in the last paragraph of §5.22: it was Altan, Quchar and Sacha Beki (with still others, presumably) who, as a group, made Temüjin their Qan. Thus one might consider revising one's grammatical statement to say that this singular alternant of *-BA* requires a singular subject except in cases where it emphasizes that two or more individuals or entities functioned in concert as a united group.

5.3 Uses of unambiguously written -bAy (=/-bay/~/-bey/

This so-called plural form of *-BA* occurs 291 times in the *Secret History*; it is written just once with the character 伯 (= *bay* = /-bay/, 9017), three times (2498; 7368, X297) with a sequence of 罷 (= *-bA°* = /-ba/) or 別 (= *be* = /-be/) plus a *y*-initial character as representation of *-BA* plus the interrogative particle (n. 14 above), and in all other occurrences with the 15-stroke character 罷 followed by a note that the earlier writing was 伯 = *-bAy* = /-bay/ ~/-bey/.

A tentative classification of all instances of *-bAy* in the SH indicates that nearly forty percent have clearly plural subjects, actual or implied, while over fifty-one percent have singular ones. (The remaining nine percent are unclear for one reason or another.) The situation is reversed, however, if one considers just the ninety-nine passages with the clearest sort of overt subject, one located in the main clause that contains our past-tense ending:[29] there we find sixty-four percent plural subjects, thirty-three percent singular (and three percent unclear). These contradictory statistics are largely the result of stylistic differences between the earlier and later chapters of the SH. Chapters 7–12 contain nearly fifty-seven percent of all singular subjects but less than twenty-three percent of the overt and unquestionable subjects of any sort,[30] so the 40/51 split is in effect placing greater weight on passages dealing with military campaigns and bureaucratic pronouncements concerning administrative reorganization, where sentences are longer, and often have only an implied subject such as 'they' = 'the troops' or 'he' = Chinggis Qaan or Ögödey Qaan. Still, the large number of singular subjects indicates that the usage of *-bAy* is more complex than one might suspect from the convenient label "plural alternant."

5.31 Plural subjects with -bAy. All in all, there are at least 116 SH passages with a plural subject, overt or implied, before a *-bAy* verb. If for the present we restrict our attention to passages containing an overt subject in the main clause, we find such subjects to be of the following sorts.

(a) A plural pronoun or demonstrative, alone or followed by a particle or brief appositive: twenty-six instances. E.g., *bida* (eight instances postposed; plus *bidan-i* in indirect discourse Z029–30); *ba* (four; not postposed), *ta* (nine, of which seven are postposed, e.g., 9017); *tede* 'they' (postposed 6171), *mü·d* 'the same ones' (6511; with *gü* 'also' 4189, 4190). E.g., *Sere-gde-bAy bida* 'We have been found out' (5472); . . . *deermed-ün hülde-jü dutaa-ju*

29. This restriction, not required in the more straightforward case of the *-bi*, *-ba*, and *-be* forms above, avoids the often difficult decision as to whether the subject of an earlier subordinate clause ending with a converb in *-JU*, *-(U)Ad*, *-(U)BAsU*, or *-tAlA* applies as well to the *-bAy* verb in the main clause.

30. Clear and overt subjects of *-bAy* verbs number twenty-six in chapters 1–3, fifty-one in 4–6, but only six in chapters 7–9, and sixteen in 10–12.

abcira-bAy je bida qoyar 'the two of us stole [back the horses], drove them off, and did indeed bring them back' (8362–63); *Ügüle-gsen üge-dür-iyen ba ese gür-bAy* 'We didn't keep our word given [earlier]' (4205–6); *Ayu-ju ba Taŋud irgen . . . kee-bAy* 'In fear, we Tang'ud people said . . .' (Y087–88); *. . . bawurci Šikiür-i mü·d gü ašgi-bAy* 'these same [men] also thrashed the steward Shikiür . . .' (4189).

(b) A collective noun referring to human beings, with plural modifier: one or two instances. *'Jamuqa-daca edü·n irgen ire-bAy' kee-n Ciŋgis Qahan ōr-tür-iyen 'Ulus ire-bAy' kee-n bayas-cu . . .* 'Because these tribes were coming in from Jamuqa['s side], Činggis Qa'an rejoiced, saying to himself that the [whole] nation was coming over [to him]' (4063–65; tr. de Rachewiltz 2004: 54). (The second quoted sentence in this passage illustrates use of *-bAy* after a singular collective-noun subject; it and two further passages properly belong in §5.32, but may more conveniently be cited here: *Dayin gür-bAy* 'The enemy has arrived' [6023, 6024],[31] *Bayi-quy-lua dayin Jirgi·n-i maŋlayla-ju gür-cü ire-bAy* 'As [they] stood [thus], the enemy arrived (pl.), the Jirgin acting as vanguard' [6083–84]). Lastly, one subject seems odd in lacking the head-noun: *. . . Ciŋgis qaan-u kirüe-dece olon Teb Teŋgeri-tür quri-qu·n bol-bAy* '. . . many [people] from Chinggis Qaan's horse station started to gather under Teb Tenggeri' (X331–32). Here *irgen* 'people' is understood after *olon*.[32] Note that in the SH *irgen* regularly takes plural modifiers and a plural verb.[33]

(c) A coordinate or appositive sequence of two or more nominals, alone or followed by a one-word modifier: some twenty instances. *. . . Ciŋgis Qahan yeke cerig mün tende bawu-ju qono-bAy* 'Chinggis Qaan and the great army camped right there for the night' (4469–70); *Toluy Cügü gürigen qoyar sayi-tur üyiled-bAy* 'Toluy and son-in-law Chügü have both performed well' (Y137–38; similarly Y160–61); *. . . emcü tümen kešig-te·n-i in-u Caaday aqa Toluy qoyar Ögödey Qahan-a tawul-bAy* '. . . elder brother Chaaday and Toluy handed over to Ögödey Qaan the personal slaves and ten thousand guards who . . .' (Z145–47); *Besü·d-ece Degey Kücügür aqa deü qoyar ire-bAy gü* 'Degey and Küchügür came also, the two [of them], elder and younger brother' (3348–49).

(d) Other nominal sequences referring to humans; some thirteen instances, mostly a plural noun with or without modifiers. E.g., *. . . Olon Doŋqayi·d esergü dobtul-bAy* 'the Olon Dongqayid galloped against [him]' (6090–91); *. . . Kita·d-un ceri·üd . . . daa-ju ire-bAy* 'the Chinese soldiers . . . came to stop [him]' (Y127–28); *Te·de qurban Merki·d maqad geyi·d-tür-iyen ajira-bAy-ū?* 'Have those three Merkid really returned home?' (2498).

(e) Sequences similar to those of (c) or (d), but referring to non-human or inanimate entities: only two instances. *. . . möŋke teŋgeri-de eüden jiloa nege-gde-bAy je* 'the door was opened and the reins [loosened for me] by Eternal Heaven' (8438–39; "i.e., Heaven opened the way to Činggis's success" [de Rachewiltz 2004: 139]); *Aqta·s man-u üyele-bAy* 'Our geldings have gained strength' (6212).

It should further be noted that of all the above plural subjects, only one refers to females: the *ta* in 2022 refers to two women, Örbey and Soqatay. Nearly all the others refer either exclusively to male humans or to a group presumably including women and perhaps children as well.

31. Ozawa 1961: 52 stated that *dayin* was plural of *dayisun*, but there seems no firm evidence for this.

32. For such deletion of *güün*, *haran*, *irgen*, see Street 1990: 191. In the present case, *irgen* occurred in the prior clause.

33. This may be seen in cases not involving past-tense *-BA*. E.g., *Te·de irgen in-u qadqu-ldu-muy je* 'Those people of his will certainly fight' (6033–34), with the plural of the *-mU* ending. Examples with *-juuy*, plural of past-tense *JUU*, are found in lines 2050, 4451–53, X213–14, X333–34. For plural modifiers, see lines 1042, 1188, 3155, 4064, 4120, 4261, 8419. But collectives do rarely occur with a plural suffix, e.g., *irge·d* 'peoples' (see ibid., 187).

5.32 Singular subjects with -bAy*: respect plurals.* Consider first the relatively few instances of absolutely unquestionable subjects, of a main clause containing the past-tense ending, that are either clearly singular or at least not definitely plural. These are of the following sorts:

(a) A pronoun *bi* or *ci*: three instances, all treated in §5.323 below.

(b) A collective noun: four instances, for which see paragraph (b) in §5.31.

(c) A person's name, with or without modifiers. Of the twenty-five instances, only one is a woman's name (with title: *Yisüy qadun* Z020–21), the rest men's. Men's names include *Jamuqa* (3281–83), *Oŋ Qan* (4322–23, 4332–33), and *Tümen Tübege·n-ü Aciq Širun* 'Achiq Shirun of the Tümen Tübegen' (6086).[34]

If we expand our focus to include not just the thirty-two instances above, but all instances of *-bAy* after a singular subject—whether certain, probable, or implied—one striking fact emerges. With one or two possible exceptions,[35] a singular subject of *-bAy* in this larger set of some 150 passages invariably refers to one or more human beings. Singular subjects of other verb-types often refer to an animal, inanimate entity, or abstract concept, but such seem foreign to *-bAy*. Further, except for the four collective instances, such subjects refer to an individual of relatively high social status; from this one may conclude that the plural *-bAy* indicates respect on the part of the speaker or writer/narrator for the subject individual. Such usages was termed honorific by Ozawa 1961, but only minimally exemplified in that article with respect to the *-BA* past tense. Below I shall rather use the term *respect plural* or the like for instances of such usage.[36]

Here are a few of the clearest instances in the *Secret History*, with the respect forms marked in translation by an upward-pointing arrow. . . . *Yisüy qadun ügüle-rün 'Köü·d noya·d kelele-ldü-dkün. Qahan söni mariya qalaun qono-bA°' kee-bAy* '. . . Yisüy Qatun said↑, "Princes and commanders, consult each other [on what to do]: the Qa'an has spent the night, his body hot [with fever]"' (Z020–21; tr. de Rachewiltz 2004: 196; similarly Y208). . . . *Ciŋgis Qahan Mönŋlig ecige-yin ger-tece qari-bAy* '. . . and [then] Cinggis Qaan returned↑ [home] from the tent of Father Mönglig' (5470–71). . . . *böe·s jüger-esü jügergen usu Toluy köün uu-bAy* '. . . and when the shamans made their incantations, Prince Toluy drank↑ the magic water [to die in place of his brother Ögödey Qaan]' (Z243–44). . . . *Höelün eke köü·d-te-en . . . kee-n ger dotora tejie-bAy* 'Mother Höelün, saying to the boys '. . .', reared↑ [them] in [her] tent' (4247–49). . . . *Temüjin Merki·d-ün Toqtoa-yi arbila-ju ab-uqsan altan büse Jamuqa anda-da büsele-ül-bAy* 'Temüjin girdled↑ his sworn friend

34. Residual instances are *Jirqoan* (3359) *Juŋso* (3358–59), *Mulqalqu* (3412), *Temüjin* (3278–80); and with titles or modifiers: *Burqan Qan* (Y084–98), *Ciŋgis Qahan* (4263, 4473–76, 5470–71, and six others), *Toluy Köün* 'Prince Toluy' (Z244), *Söyiketü Cerbi* (3353), *Qori Šilemün Taysi* (6092–93), *Dāritay Odcigin* (3411), *Suqu Secen* (3360–61), *Sorqan Šira* (4477–82).

35. In line 3379–80 we find *Jaarin ire-jü na-dur nidün-dür-iyen üje-ül-bAy* 'a [heavenly] portent came and showed me, [before] my [very] eyes . . .', where the subject of the converb presumably must be taken as subject of the main verb as well. But a few lines later (3391) we find rather a plural form of this word (for which, see de Rachewiltz 2004: 449) as subject: . . . *jaari·d nidün-tür üje-ül-jü* . . . , and one must wonder whether *jaarin* itself could sometimes function as a collective noun. A second possible exception involves *toosun* 'dust [cloud]' in 6145–47; de Rachewiltz, 93, translates this as subject both of the converb *qar-cu* and of the final verb *yorci-bAy*, but perhaps the latter has 'the enemy troops' as implied subject.

36. Ozawa 1961 also sets up what he calls "unhonorific" forms, which differ from his masculine singular ones only in the case of the *l*-initial past tense. Note that de Rachewiltz uses the terms *plural of respect* (2004: 1332) and *pluralis majestatis* (742, 839, 926) for occasional cases where a plural nominal or pronominal form is used of a single person.

Jamuqa with the golden belt taken as loot from Toqto'a of the Merkit' (3278–80; tr. de Rachewiltz 2004: 45; similarly in lines 3281–83, of Jamuqa's gift to Temüjin). Once the *-bAy* form is even used of Temüjin before he was elected qan: *Edöe ese ire-bAy* 'Now he [= Temüjin] has not come↑ [with us]' (5306).

It should be noted that similar subjects in rather similar contexts can occur also with plain, non-respect forms in *-be* or *-bi* (or *-bA°*; see below), so use of the plural of respect was apparently merely an option for the speaker.[37]

One SH passage in §201 actually mentions social status after use of respect plurals. In lines 8211–17, Chinggis Qaan, though about to order the execution of his sworn friend Jamuqa after the latter's betrayal, three times uses *-muy*—the respect plural of *-mu*—in sentences referring to Jamuqa, and then adds: *Kündü mör-tü güün buy* 'He is a man of high standing' (tr. de Rachewiltz 2004: 132, 755–57).

The examples above are straightforward instances of plurals that simply indicate respect for the subject of the verb. Most instances, however, seem used in ways that imply some other strand of meaning as well. Subsections below illustrate three different circumstances under which respect plurals are most likely to appear; following these are remarks concerning potential ambiguity and possible textual errors relating to respect plurals.

5.321 Adjunctive Usage. Often the plural is used in cases where a leader, and others with him, act together. E.g., *Teün-ü qoyina Ciŋgis Qahan qonin jil Kita·d irgen-tür morila-bAy* 'After that, in the Sheep Year, Chinggis Qaan rode↑ against the Kitad people' (Y011–12); Chinggis did not ride alone, obviously, so the plural *-bAy* is not entirely inappropriate. Likewise, the following: . . . *Ciŋgis Qahan Šira Degtür bawu-bAy* '. . . Chinggis Qaan [and his troops] set up camp↑ at Shira Degter' (Y026). . . . *Ciŋgis Qahan Quba Qaya übülje-bAy* 'Chinggis Qaan [and his troops] wintered↑ [at] Quba Qaya' (5015). . . . *Oŋ Qan kele gür-ge-ül-üed cerig eüs-cü ötörle-n Ciŋgis Qahan-tur Oŋ Qan gür-cü ire-bAy* '. . . after Ong Qan received the news he set his army in motion, and he [and his troops] speedily arrived↑ at Chinggis Qaan['s camp]' (4319–23). . . . *Tümen Tübege·n-ü Aciq Širun dobtul-bAy* 'Achiq Shirun of the Tümen Tübegen [and his horsemen] charged [ahead]' (6086). Similarly, the second and third sentences in this passage from lines 3410–12: *Qunan teriü-te·n Genige·s niken güreen ire-bAy*[38] *gü. Basa Dāritay odcigin niken güreen ire-bAy gü. Jadaran-aca Mulqalqu ire-bAy gü* 'The Geniges, with Qunan at their head, came↑ also, [as] one camp. Further, Dāritay Odchigin [and his followers] came↑ as one camp, too. From the Jadaran came↑ also Mulqalqu [and his men]'. A good number of verb-stems such as the four above occur with such an adjunctive *-bAy*, but occasionally one finds instead the ambiguous *-bA°* (or perhaps the singular *-be* alternant)[39] in sentences similar to those above. E.g., *morila-bA°* in 3101; *bawu-bA°* in 6437, Y419, Y430, and *übülje-bA°* in 5123–24, all referring to a leader and those with him.

English requires a singular verb in a sentence such as *Washington has crossed the Delaware*; Middle Mongolian apparently allowed either a singular or a plural verb—the latter with agreement *ad sensum*. It should be noted that this use of *-bAy* in such cases is not

37. Cf. de Rachewiltz 2004: 741–42 and Mostaert 1952: 454 for remarks on similarly inconsistent use of respectful plural pronouns in lieu of singulars.

38. The Pao-Palladius manuscript has a note stating that the earlier writing was *keebe* here; the more reliable Ku certified copy has rather the note for *keebAy*. The two sources agree in showing the earlier writing *keebAy* in the next sentence.

39. The only reasonably clear instance known to me is the *gödöl-be* of 5283 (with *Buyiruq Qan* as subject); possibly the *neyile-be* in 6453 is a further instance, though Qasar was accompanied by only a few companions.

simply an artifact of the Chinese transcription: for in passages matching the first three examples just cited (and others as well) the Altan Tobci also has plurals *morila-bai* (line 3419, §110a), *baɣu-bai* (line 3429, §110b), and *ebüleje-bei* (line 1421, §45a). At any rate, this usage is of interest because it provides a possible semantic bridge between the true plural use of *-bAy* and respect plurals such as those in the next two sections.

5.322 Jussive usage. Often the plural is used in sentences expressing a formal act or command of someone in authority, perhaps implying that these have legal force. In over a dozen instances, for example, *kee-bAy* is used of Chinggis Qaan when he speaks *ex cathedra* as it were, issuing a command or decree. This is nearly always in sentences with no overt subject, so the honorific *-bAy* in effect pinpoints the Qaan as speaker—almost as though one were to capitalize the understood 'he'. E.g., *Basa jarliq bol-urun 'Šigi Qutuqu-lua jarqu kebteül-ece jarqu sonos-ulca-tuqay' kee-bAy* 'Again giving an order, [He] said↑ "Let [some] of the nightguards hear legal actions, together with Shigi Qutuqtu" '.[40] (X084–85; five similar instances of *keebAy* follow in the next ten lines). In three passages (Z273, Z422, Z462) this usage occurs also with *Ögödey Qaan* as overt subject. (It should be emphasized, however, that *kee-be* also occurs in passages quite similar to that just above; e.g., several times in lines 3488–96. Hence the respect plural seems optional in such circumstances.)

By contrast, when Chinggis Qaan speaks informally *kee-be* is usual: *Ene üge-tür Ciŋgis Qahan jarliq bol-urun 'Ögödey eyimü·n üge·s ügüle-gü bö-esü bol-u je' kee-be. Basa 'Toluy yau kee-mü. Kelele' kee-be* 'At that word, Chinggis Qaan spoke, saying "If Ögödey speaks such words, [that] is sufficient'. Further, he said "Toluy, what do [you] say? Speak [up]" ' (Y320–22; similarly in Y297, Y3112, addressed to others). So too for Ögödey Qaan, in line Z579: *kee-be* occurs after his lengthy speech of self-criticism that concludes the *Secret History* as we know it today. Other examples include the following: *kelele-n bara-asu 'Jöb' kee-be* 'When [Sorqan Shira] had finished speaking, [Chinggis Qaan] said "Good" ' (4482–83; de Rachewiltz 2004: 68 "[You did] right"); *Ene kele ire-ül-üed Ciŋgis Qahan ügüle-rün 'Uruu·d-un Jürcedey ebin ci yau kee-mü. Cima-yi maŋlayla-ya' kee-be* 'After receiving this news, Chinggis Qaan said "Uncle Jürcedey of the Uruud, what do you say? let's make you the vanguard" ' (6075–76).

Similar jussive use of the *-bAy* form, with or without an overt subject, often occurs after other verb stems reflecting commands or official acts of the Qaan. Chinggis once even uses such a verb of himself; after appointing several men to different positions he says, in summary: *Jüg jüg tüši-bAy tan-i* 'I hereby appoint you to these various positions' (3497; lit. '[I] appointed↑ you [in] various directions'). With other verbs: *Qasar-lua noya·d-aca Jürcedey Alci Tolun cerbi qurban-i ilē-ldü-bAy* 'With Qasar he [= Chinggis Qaan] sent↑ from among the commanders Jürcedey, Alchi, and Tolum Cherbi' (Y190–92); *Tende Belgütey Büri Bökö qoyar-i abaldu-ul-bAy* 'Then he [= Chinggis Qaan] made↑ Belgutey and Büri Bökö wrestle'; and *Ötege·d-ey Cormaqan-i Baqtad irgen-tür Qalibay soltan-tur ayala-ul-bAy* 'He [= Chinggis Qaan] sent↑ Chormaqan of the Ötegen on a campaign against the Baqtad people and the Qalibay Soltan' (Y480–81; so Y492, Y499); at least once we find this usage with 'he' = Ögödey Qaan as implied subject, and *ayala-ul-bAy* (Z282). Other clear examples of the usage in this paragraph may be found three times in 7184–87 (*tüši-bAy* 'appointed'), and in 7012 (*tala-ul-bAy* 'had [his troops] plunder').

But it is notable that the sequence *jarliq bol-bA°* 'issued an order; said (to an inferior)', which occurs seventy-five times in the SH, is never written with the *-bAy* alternant. Clearly

40. Literally this is 'As to judicial matters (*jarqu*) with Šigi Qutuqtu, from [among] the nightguards [some] shall hear judicial matters with [him]' (de Rachewiltz 2004: 840).

this entire sequence had become an idiomatic unit, the first two morphemes being originally a "calque of Turkic *yarlıγ bol-*, lit. 'for an order (decree, command) to be', i.e., 'to be ordered' → 'to order' " (de Rachewiltz 2004: cxii).

5.323 Expressive usage. In a few passages it seems that *-bAy* is used after a singular subject for purposes of sarcasm or irony. In §177 Chinggis Qaan sends a lengthy message to Ong Qan, who had betrayed him. The initial sentence contains a respect plural: *Qan ecige min-u, yaun cimar-tur nama ayu-ul-bAy ci?* 'Qan my father, for what grievance have you frightened↑ me?' (6213–14). But the following sentences contain an extensive sequence of verbs that are singulars rather than respect plurals, in sentences berating Ong Qan for failing to keep his word and abandoning his supposed ally. More specifically, we find singular nonpast form *ayu-ul-u* with *ci* at the end of the next sentence; then singular past-tense forms *köki-ül-de-be ci* (6218–19), *bol-juu je ci* (6237), *a-juu je ci* (6258), *gödöl-be je ci* (6292), and *bü-lee ci* (6314–15), with nine instances of *-bA° ci* or *-bA° je ci* in 6217–316. Thus the single initial respect plural must surely have been used sarcastically.

Such false respect forms also appear in §196, where Jamuqa, after taking the trouble to frighten Tayang Qan almost out of his wits, sends a message to Chinggis Qaan delighting in his success. De Rachewiltz (2004: 122) translates the following poetic lines as shown below. (The upward-pointing arrows are my addition.)

Tayaŋ Qan /üge-tür min-u üküdgü-jü /öede temece-n ürgü-jü qar-bAy. / Ama-ar ala-qda-ju ayu-ju /aula abari-n qar-bAy. /Anda qadauci. Mü·d /aula-tur qar-bA°. /E·de esergüle-gü ciray ügeü·n buy.

'At my words Tayang Qan has lost his head
And in panic he has scrambled↑ to the heights.
Frightened to death by [the words from] my mouth,
He was climbed↑ the mountain.
Sworn friend, take care!
Up they [= *mü·d*] went, climbing the mountain,
And have lost the will to resist.' (7423–27)

I suspect, too that in a few instances a respect form used of oneself indicates self-deprecating irony: there seems no other possible reason for the occurrence of a plural verb. In 6336–38, Ong Qan wails:

Ay soyiluq. Köün-ece-en
qaqaca-quy-ū? Törö-dece qaqaca-bA°.
Hiri[c]e-güy-ū? Üyile-dece hirice-bAy bi.

'Oh, Sinful [that I am]!
By abandoning my son, I abandoned the norm;
By parting from him, I parted↑ from [my] duty.' (de Rachewiltz 2004: 100–101)

In §140 the champion wrestler Büri Bökö, having offended Chinggis Qaan, is forced to wrestle with Belgütey, and ends up with his spine broken. He says: *Belgütey-e ülü ilaq-da-qu bü-lee bi. Qahan-aca ayu-ju arqada-n una-qu ariya-qu bol-un amin-dur-iyan gür-te-bAy bi* 'I would not have been defeated by Belgütei, but fearing the Qa'an, I took a fall on purpose. I hesitated, so I lost↑ my life' (4280–83; tr. de Rachewiltz 2004: 62, 513). This is immediately followed by . . . *kee-ed ükü-jü ilē-be* 'after saying [that] he died', with the non-respect past tense of the auxiliary verb *ilē-* (which here has perfective force, as in 4279).

Similarly, in §244, Mother Höelün, while berating her son Chinggis Qaan, puts words into his mouth, sarcastically having him use the respect plural of himself: *Edöe 'Daysun güün-i muqudqa-bAy' kee-jü Qasar-i üje-n yada-muy ta* 'Now, saying "[I have] destroyed↑

the enemy" you are not able to see [i.e., bear the sight of] Qasar' (X307–8). Note the use of plural *ta* 'you' in place of singular *ci* (as a dozen times in the SH), which here reinforces the respect form *-bAy* and its sarcasm.

In §273, Toluy, a son of Chinggis Qaan, drinks a magic potion which is supposed to cure his brother Ögödey Qaan but will result in his own death: he drinks the potion and before dying says first *Soqta-bA° bi* (Z245), then simply *Soqta-bAy* (Z248), both 'I have become drunk'. According to de Rachewiltz 3005: 994, 999–1000, this SH account of Toluy's death is "an idealized and, therefore, falsified version of the event," for a Persian source tells us that Toluy was "excessively addicted to . . . wine" and died of alcoholism. An ironic, self-deprecating implication put into Toluy's mouth by the author of the *Secret History* is certainly appropriate here.

5.324 Potential ambiguity. When there is no overt subject in the main clause, it is sometimes unclear whether *-bAy* represents a true plural (with change of subject) or one of respect. E.g., . . . *Ciŋgis Qahan ene üge sonos-uad qatara-ju gür-cü Ciŋgis Qahan Qadaan-tur bawu-ju teberi-ldü-bAy* 'on hearing these words, Chinggis Qaan rode at a trot, and reaching [her] dismounted at Qadaan['s side]; and [the two of them] embraced' (4465–67). But in theory the *-bAy* here could be simply a respect form, with no new subject implied: '. . . and [he] embraced↑ [her]', lit. 'he took part in mutual embracing [with her]'.[41]

Sometimes, too, the non-respect interpretation has only a vague *they* as implied subject. Consider this sequence: *Ene üge-yi Ciŋgis qaan-a öci-esü jarliq bol-urun . . . kee-be. Tedüy gü mököri-ül-bAy* (5261–65). The final verb here could be interpreted as a simple respect plural: 'When [they] reported this to Chinggis Qaan, [he] ordered [such and such]. Thereupon [he = Chinggis Qaan] beheaded↑ [him]'. But it might better be taken as either an adjunctive usage ('[Chinggis Qaan and his men] beheaded him'), or assumed to have a vague 'they' understood as subject. Both de Rachewiltz and Cleaves preferred to translate this sentence with an English passive, thus nicely avoiding the necessity of specifying a subject: 'He was cut down immediately' (de Rachewiltz 2004: 79), and 'And so he was beheaded' (Cleaves 1982: 85). A similar passive translation is appropriate in a number of other passages where no specific subject seems clearly implied.

5.325 Possible textual errors. Two passages from chapter 11 may illustrate instances where one cannot help suspecting that a textual error has replaced an instance of *-bAy* with some other alternant of *-BA*. In §257 we find that Chinggis Qaan (and his troops) rode against the Sartaul: *Jebe-yi maŋlay ilē-bAy. Jebe-yin gejige Sübeetey-i ilē-bAy. Sübeetey-in gejige Toqucar-i ilē-be* '[He] sent↑ Jebe as vanguard. [He] sent↑ Sübeetey as support for Jebe. He sent Toqucar as support for Sübeetey' (Y371–73). Here one would expect either three instances of *-bAy* or perhaps three of *-be*.

Similarly, in Y417–18 we find *kee-n ilē-be* and *kee-n ilē-bAy* in successive sentences: *Tedüy Ciŋgis Qahan Baru<l>a[n] keer-ece qari-ju, Joci Caaday Ögödey qurban köü·d-i*

41. Note that the reciprocal/cooperative *-ldU-* may occur with a singular subject and respect plural verb: . . . *Ciŋgis qahan jasaq ügüle-ldü-run '. . .' kee-n jasaqla-ldu-bAy.* '. . . Činggis Qa'an jointly issued the [following] decree: ". . . ." So he decreed with them' (5174–79; tr. de Rachewiltz 2004: 76). De Rachewiltz (567–68) notes that the *-ldU-* morpheme is here used as a cooperative, as shown by the Chinese gloss. He adds: ". . . it seems clear to me that the joint promulgation of the decree can only refer to it having been agreed upon by Činggis together with the other military leaders, chief among whom were his own kinsmen Altan, Qučar, and Dāritai. I think that the reciprocal/cooperative form is used precisely in anticipation of what these very personages did, i.e., contravening the mutually agreed order."

Table 2. Distribution of 罷 (with and without notes) representing past-tense *-BA*

Characters:	罷 with note 別	罷 with note 八	罷 with note 巴	罷 with note 伯	罷 alone, with no note (instances and percentages)	Total
Representing:	/-be/	/-ba/		/-bay/~ /-bey/	*-ba°* = /-ba/~/-be/, /-bay~/ /-bey/, perhaps /-bi/	
Chapters						
1	0	0	0	0	87 = 100%	87
2	2	0	0	1	114 = 97%	117
3	25	0	1	43	48 = 41%	117
4	30	0	1	48	24 = 23%	103
5	21	0	0	30	33 = 39%	84
6	39	0	0	40	33 = 29%	112
7	16	0	0	21	23 = 38%	60
8	18	0	0	15	39 = 54%	72
9	7	0	0	10	63 = 79%	80
10	32	1	0	15	51 = 52%	99
11	21	0	0	38	38 = 39%	97
12	9	0	0	26	51 = 59%	86
Total:	220[42]	1	2	287	604 = 54%	1114

'. . . Ürüŋgeci balaqasu bawu-dqun kee-n ilē-be. Toluy-i 'Iru Isebür teriü-te·n olon balaqa·d bawu-dqun' kee-n ilē-bAy 'Then Činggis Qa'an, returning from the Baru'an Plain, sent [his] three sons, J̌oči, Ča'adai and Ögödei, saying, ". . . and set up camp at the city of Ürünggeči." He sent↑ Tolui, saying "Set up camp at Iru, Isebür and many other towns" ' (Y415–18; tr. de Rachewiltz 2004: 191).

One would expect consistency in usage of respect plurals in such obviously parallel and contiguous sentences; but perhaps these represent merely stylistic variation. Similar examples could be cited involving other alternants of *-BA*; see the next section for a few involving *-bA°*.

5.4 Uses of residual writings showing ambiguous -bA°

In more than half its occurrences in the *Secret History*, *-BA* is written with the character 罷 (*ba*[5]) to which no note is attached telling us the earlier reading. While a majority of these writings surely represent earlier forms /-ba/ after back vowel and /-be/ after front, others almost certainly represent what earlier were /-bay/ or /-bey/ forms; whether some replaced earlier feminine /-bi/ forms is less clear. Consider the following facts.

(a) Table 2 shows that the addition of notes to 罷 (*ba*[5]) in the text was done inconsistently. Notes not only are totally absent from chapters 1–2 (except for three instances on the two re-cut leaves at the start of chapter 2), but are missing at more than half the possible points in chapters 8–10 and 12. Either the addition of notes was done quite carelessly, or for many parts of the YCPS the earlier information needed for such notes was simply missing. Even in chapters with a large proportion of notes to *ba*[5], such notes sometimes seem unevenly distributed.

42. The /-be/ column includes all four instances of 罷 covered by the single note in line X264 (§3.1 above).

(b) Subjects of all 604 instances of noteless *ba*^{5} in the text are approximately seventy-five percent singular and twenty-one percent plural (with four percent unclear).[43] Inasmuch as unquestionable /-ba/ and /-be/ almost never occur with plural subjects (§5.2 above), it seems clear that most if not all of the noteless past-tenses in our text that have plural subjects must earlier have been /-bay/ or /-bey/. In line 2102, for example, Begter says to Temüjin and Qasar: . . . *yeki-n teyin sedki-bA°[= *sedki-bay] ta?* '. . . how can you [two] harbor such thoughts [towards me]?' (2102). Similarly, another instance of *-bA° ta* in 9119; and, with a longer subject: *Belgünütey Bügünütey Buqu Qatagi Buqatu Salji dörbeüle ab-ulca-bA°[= *ab-ulca-bay]* 'Belgünütey, Bügünütey, Buqu Qatagi, and Buqatu Salji, [all] four [of them] took a share' (1150). We might perhaps expect a plural verb also after the collective subject of . . . *te·de irgen ügüle-rün* . . . *kee-bA°* 'those people spoke, saying . . .' (1192–98). It might be mentioned, too, that in many cases a *-bA°* form is parallel to *-bAy* forms in contiguous, parallel sentences. In lines X084–102, for example, Chinggis Qaan gives a series of brief orders consisting solely of a quotation plus a form of *kee-* 'say': the first six sentences end in *kee-bAy*, the seventh in *kee-bA°*, presumably representing that same plural form of *-BA*. Likewise in Z533–39 we find successive sentences ending in *qar-qa-ul-bAy*, *saūl-bAy*, *qar-qa-ul-bAy*, *bol-qa-bA°*, and *bol-qa-bAy*—again, presumably, all properly plurals.

(c) While some instances of noteless *ba*^{5} after plural subjects thus seem to conceal earlier writings with *-bAy*, there is no way of knowing how many sentences with noteless *ba*^{5} and a singular subject may originally have contained the *-bAy* of respect plurals.

(d) The SH contains, in all, fifty-eight sentences in which the subject of a *-BA* verb refers to an individual woman: of these, twenty-four contain *-bi*, nine *-be*, three *-bAy*, while the remaining twenty-two have the ambiguous *-bA°*. At least some of the *-bA°* instances may well have been *-bi* in an earlier draft of our text. In lines 2059–61, for example, a sentence ending in *tejie-bA°* '[she] raised [children]' is immediately followed by a parallel one with *tejie-bi*. The first of these may well have been written with *-bi* in draft α, accidentally replaced by *-bA°* in draft β, and never corrected. Similarly, as mentioned in §3.22 above, the second of eight instances of *unu-bA°* 'mounted a horse' within three lines (2434–37; see first example in §4)—the only one with a female rather than a male as subject. One might guess, too, that four sentences ending in *ög-bA°*, *oor-bA°*, *ög-bA°*, and *yada-bA°* in lines 1119–22 of §19 were originally **ög-bi*, **oor-bay*, **ög-bi*, **yada-bay*, with alternants of *-BA* properly matching the various subjects. But I would by no means suggest emending the SH text in such cases; it may be that unknown stylistic factors were involved in any or all such cases.

5.5 Conclusions

The manuscript tradition of the Mongol text of the *Secret History* is such that we will probably never fully understand all the factors involved in use of the alternate shapes of the past-tense ending *-BA*. But it does seem clear that the now-traditional names for its alternants are essentially correct. The sex of a human named in a subject-normal was relevant only for the *-bi* alternant, which was used primarily with female human subjects. The other two alternants differed essentially in number, the *-bA* = /-ba/~/-be/ shape being used almost exclusively with singular subjects, the *-bAy* = /-bay/~/-bey/ shape more often with plural ones. But the exceptional cases exemplified above merely confirm what we might have assumed from the start: that speakers and writers of Middle Mongolian felt free—as in any living lan-

43. If one considers only unquestionable subjects, in the main clause with the past-tense ending, then nearly eighty-four percent are singular, fifteen percent plural, and one percent unclear.

guage—to use these alternants in novel ways to express other semantic nuances: metaphorically expanding the use of *-bAy* to show respect for an individual mentioned as a singular subject, for example, or to indicate that a leader acted together with his followers. Similarly, one might occasionally use the feminine alternant *-bi* of a non-female entity in order to imply its intimate connection with a woman or a feminine characteristic; or employ singular *-bA* after paired names in order to emphasize that two individuals or groups acted as one. It is because of such transferred uses of alternants of the indicative endings that raw statistics on their use seem so often inconclusive and unpersuasive.

It remains to be seem, of course, whether such conclusions based on a single ending in the *Secret History* apply equally well to this and other three-alternant indicative endings in Middle Mongolian documents generally. The present writer intends to produce other articles that will examine this whole matter, and also pinpoint semantic differences between *-BA* and the other two past-tense endings of this language. Such research should offer a solid basis for historical investigations into the fate of these endings in later Mongolian texts and spoken languages.

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