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Mon. Ser. 37 (1986–87)

YÜ DA-DJÜN: ON THE DATING OF THE *SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS**

Translated by
WILHELM K. MÜLLER

Chinese and foreign scholars have proposed all kinds of theories concerning the dating of the famous Mongolian work, the *Secret History of the Mongols* (henceforth *SH*), but so far have not arrived at a definitive consensus. In the present paper we will first review all the important theories concerning this question, then we shall analyse them, and in conclusion we will propose our own opinion concerning the dating of the *SH*.

I

Scholars who have studied the dating of the *SH* have traditionally taken the colophon (§ 282) as the principal basis for their investigation and analysis of this question.

The original Mongolian text of the colophon (§ 282) of the *SH* runs as follows:

Yeke qurilta quriju quluqana jil quran saran-da Kelüren-ü Köde'e-aral-un Dolo'an-Boldaq-a Šilginček qoyar ja'ura ordos bawuju bükü-tür bičijü dawusba.
[We] have finished writing at the time when the great diet was assembled and when, in the year of the Rat, in the month of the Roebuck, the imperial palaces were established at Dolo'an-bolda of Köde'e-aral on the Kerülen, between the two [localities called] Šilginček and....

The condensed Chinese translation of this conclusion of § 282 of the *SH*, made at the beginning of the Ming period, reads: "This book has been completed during the great assembly which took place during the seventh month of the year of the Rat in the area of Köde'e-aral on the Kerülen."

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* This article is a somewhat abridged translation of a paper by Prof. Yü Da-djün 余大鈞, Beijing University, titled "*Menggu bishi* chengshu niandai kao"「蒙古秘史」成書年代考 which originally appeared in *Zhongguo shi yanjiu* 中國史研究 1982,1: 144–159. For the translation Prof. Yü revised the original article. For an alternative view of the problem dealt with by Prof. Yü, see Igor de Rachewiltz's article in *Monumenta Serica* 24 (1965): 185–206, and also his observations following this article.
—The Editors—

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Because this translation is an abbreviation, I feel free to translate the Mongolian original as follows:

> When they were gathered to hold the great *qurilta* [the great assembly to transact the highest affairs of state], in the 7th month of the year of the Rat, while the tent-palace was stationed at Dolo'an-Boldaq-a of Köde'e-aral on the Kerülen river, between both Šilginček..., [this book] was completed.

In the past scholars who studied the dating of the *SH* focussed their attention upon the "year of the Rat" of this passage, and Chinese and foreign scholars always thought that the *SH* was completed in some year of the Rat (子年) which corresponds to either 1228 (*wuzi* 戊子 year), or 1240 (*gengzi* 庚子 year), or 1252 (*renzi* 壬子 year), or 1264 (*jiazi* 甲子 year), and so forth.

II

In the past a plurality of scholars held the opinion that the *SH* was composed in the year 1240 (*gengzi nian*). Therefore we are first going to analyse this theory.

The earliest scholars to advocate this theory were Xu Song 徐松, Li Wentian 李文田, and others of the Qing period. Thereafter this theory was taken up by Chinese scholars like Tu Ji 屠寄, Chen Binhe 陳彬龢, and others, and foreign scholars like Naka Michiyo 那珂通世, W. W. Barthold, B. Ya. Vladimirtsov, P. Pelliot, S. A. Kozin, E. Haenisch, Hattori Shirō 服部四郎, Ts. Damdinsüren, P. Poucha, Iwamura Shinobu 岩村忍.[1]

This theory is entirely based on the fact that the *SH* describes events up to the time of Ögödei and does not yet mention Ögödei's death. It was therefore assumed that the year of the completion of the *SH* given in the colophon (§ 282) was the year of the Rat (a *gengzi* year) one year before Ögödei's death. This was the year 1240.

Thus Li Wentian writes in his *Yuan chao bishi zhu* 元朝秘史注 concerning the dating of the *SH* as follows: "Since Taizong 太宗 died in the 11th month of the

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1) P. Pelliot, "Deux lacunes dans le texte mongol actuel de *l'Histoire secrète des Mongols*" in *Journal asiatique* 232 (*Mélanges asiatiques* 1940–41, 1), pp. 1–18; B. Ja. Vladimircov, *Obščestvennyj stroj Mongolov* (1934), Introduction, ch. 3, § 1; E. Haenisch, *Die Geheime Geschichte der Mongolen*, 2nd revised edition (Leipzig, 1948), p. 148; S. A. Kozin, *Sokrovennoe skazanie* (Moscow/Leningrad, 1941), pp. 17–18, 47 and 199; Ts. Damdinsüren, *Menggu bishi* 蒙古秘史, tr. into Chinese by Xie Zaishan 謝再善 (Beijing, 1956), pp. 12 and 276; P. Poucha, *Die Geheime Geschichte der Mongolen als Geschichtsquelle und Literaturdenkmal* (Prag, 1956), p. 189; Iwamura Shinobu 岩村忍, *Genchō hishi—Chingisu-han jitsuroku* 元朝秘史—チンギス=ハン實錄— (Tokyo, 1963), p. 201.

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13th year *xinchou* 辛丑, this year of the Rat was the 12th year *gengzi*. At the time of the compilation of the book Taizong had not yet died."[2]

Similarly, Naka Michiyo gives in the Japanese annotated translation of the *SH* the following introduction to the *Veritable Records of* Činggis Qan (成吉思汗實錄):

> The original of this book [i.e. the *SH*] was written at the time of Taizong of the Yuan dynasty. The book concludes with the words: "When they were gathered to hold the great *qurilta*, in the 7th month of the year of the Rat, while the tent-palace was stationed between Dolo'an-Boldaq-a and Šilginček of Köde'e-aral on the Kerülen river, [this book] was completed." The year of the Rat was the 12th year of Yuan Taizong, a *gengzi* year..., according to the Western calendar, the year 1240, 666 years before the present *bingwu* 丙午 year (1906). *Aral* 阿剌勒 means an island in a river: Köde'e zhou 闊迭額洲 was an island in the Kerülen 客魯漣 river. *Ordo* 斡兒朶 is the tent-palace of the Qa'an. The *ordo* of Köde'e zhou was the great *ordo* 大斡兒朶 among the four *ordo* of Yuan Taizong, the location where the state assemblies of the Mongols used to take place. The statement that it was compiled in the great *ordo* where the state assembly was taking place, means that it was committed to writing upon an imperial edict by (an) able Uighur scribe(s).[3]

But a deeper analysis shows that this theory is lacking in foundation and that it is merely a simple explanation considered as self-evident.

There is, first of all, a basic problem to be resolved: did in (the *gengzi* year) 1240 a great *qurilta* take place in Köde'e-aral on the Kerülen river (the Qielülian 怯綠連 river in the *Yuan shi* 元史, today's Kelulun 克魯倫 river), the location of Činggis-Qan's great *ordo*?

In the Persian historical literature of the 13th and 14th centuries, such as *The History of the World-Conqueror* (in Persian: *Tarīkh-i-J̌ahān-Gushā*) by the Persian historian J̌uwainī and in *J̌āmi et-Tawārikh* (in Chinese: *Shi ji* 史集) by the Persian author Rashīd-ed-Dīn, *qūrīltāī* (here written *qurilta*) etymologically means 'assembly', 'meeting'. Hence in the condensed translation of the early Ming period the *qurilta* of § 282 of the *SH* is translated as "assembly" and *yeke qurilta* as "great assembly." However, this word contains a specific meaning at different periods and does not point to just any kind of assembly or meeting. During the late period of the primeval society and in the transitional period resulting in a class society this word meant the meeting of the clan or the tribe, which constituted the most author-

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2) Li Wentian, *Yuan chao bishi zhu* (Guangxu *pingshen* year [1896], Jianxi cunshe keben 漸西村舍刻本), *juan* 15, p. 10a.

3) Naka Michiyo 那珂通世, tr., *Chingisu-kan jitsuroku* 成吉思汗實錄 (Tokyo, 1943, 2nd enlarged ed.), "Joron" 序論.

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itative voice of either the clan or the tribe. After Činggis-Qan had established the Mongol *qanate*, the word *qurilta* (or *quriltai*) had again a very specific meaning and did basically not mean just any kind of assembly. According to the *SH*, J̌uwainī's *Tarīkh-i-J̌ahān-Gushā* (*The History of the World-Conqueror*), Rashīd-ed-Dīn's *J̌āmi et-Tawārikh* (*Sbornik letopisei*), and other basic historical materials, this word did not mean an assembly of ordinary people or any gathering or banquet of ordinary nature of the princes and nobles; not even the solemn banquets to which the Great Qan of the Mongols used to invite the princes and ministers at various occasions for celebrations were called *qurilta* (*quriltai*). In the books of J̌uwainī and Rashīd-ed-Dīn, for example, there are only two gatherings called *quriltai* in the time of Ögödei: first, the great *qurilta* in 1229 when Ögödei was elected Great Qan;[4] second, the *qurilta* held in 1234 or 1235 at which a basic policy proclamation was issued, namely to send troops on expeditions against various countries.[5] Although we know from the *Yuan shi*, the literary collections of Yuan people, *The Journey of W. Rubruk* and other basic historical materials that the Great Qan of the Mongols often called together the princes and high officials to hold grandiose gatherings and banquets, and although there certainly were many gatherings and feasts during the thirteen years of Ögödei's reign, in the *Sbornik letopiseï* and *The History of the World-Conqueror* there are only the two gatherings mentioned above which were called *quriltai*. The *quriltai* mentioned in these two works which occurred at other times than Ögödei's also meant highest political meetings for the most important affairs of state, where the princes and high officials of the Mongols elected the Great Qan of the Mongols (or the sovereigns over the four great *qanate*) or where the Great Qan of the Mongols (or the sovereigns over the four great *qanate*) convoked the princes and high officials to discuss and decide upon military expeditions, to proclaim imperial orders, and so on.[6]

In short, *qurilta* or *quriltai* were great assemblies of the princes and *noyan* 那顏 [nobles] convoked by the highest ruler of the Mongols in order to transact the highest affairs of state; they were not normal gatherings or banquets of a common nature.[7] *Yeke qurilta* or great *qurilta* were solemn *qurilta* which means that they

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4) J. A. Boyle, tr., *The History of the World-Conqueror by 'Ala-ad-Din 'Atamalik Juvaini* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), p. 187; Rasīd al-Dīn, *Sbornik letopiseï*, vol. 2, tr. by Yu. P. Verkhovskiĭ (Moscow/Leningrad, 1960), p. 18.

5) *The History of the World-Conqueror*, p. 196; *Sbornik letopiseï*, vol. 2, p. 35.

6) *The History of the World-Conqueror*, pp. 268, 562, 567, etc.; *Sbornik letopiseï*, vol. 2, pp. 129, 130, 144, 145, etc.

7) See also Yanai Wataru 箭內亙, "Menggu Khuriltai (ji guohui) zhi yanjiu" 蒙古庫利爾台（卽國會）之研究 in *Yuan chao zhidu kao* 元朝制度考 , tr. by Chen Jie 陳捷 et al. (Commercial Press, 1934), pp. 51–129.

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were not like common *qurilta* and that they were specially solemn and high assemblies for the highest affairs of state.

Nowhere in *The History of [the] Campaigns of Činggis Qan* 聖武親征錄, the *Yuan shi*, *Sbornik letopiseï*, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, and other pertinent historical materials do we find any records concerning a *qurilta* which was held in 1240 or in 1239 and 1241, the years nearest to 1240. Which especially important affairs of state were there in the year 1240, or close to that year, which needed the convocation of a specially solemn assembly? Reading through all the pertinent historical materials not even the slightest trace of such a thing can be discovered. Based on historical sources such as *The History of [the] Campaigns of Činggis Qan*, the *Yuan shi*, the *Sbornik letopiseï*, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, the *SH*, etc., we know that in the year 1240 or the years before or after that, i.e. within the last few years before Ögödei's death, there were no especially important affairs of state which required the convocation of such an assembly. In the year 1240 many princes of the leading Mongol clans, like Jöči's sons Batu, Siban and Berke, Čaghatai's sons Baidar and Büri, Ögödei's sons Güyük and Gadan, Tolui's sons Möngke and Böček, as well as the general Sübetei and his son Uriangqatai, and others, had not yet returned to Mongolian territory because they took part in the Western military expedition against Europe. Given the fact that many important princes 宗王 and great generals could not attend, it would have been difficult to convoke an ordinary *qurilta*, not to speak of a *yeke qurilta*. Therefore there was in fact no great *qurilta* called together in the *gengzi* year 1240 at Köde'e-aral on the Kerülen river.

Maintaining the contrary opinion, Chen Binhe wrote in 1927 in the new preface to his selected annotations of the *Yuanchao bishi*:

> [Ding Qian 丁謙, 1843–1919] overestimated "the great *qurilta*," thinking there was only a great assembly after the death of Taizu in order to establish a new ruler; he did not know that at other times, too, there were great assemblies. A note in the *Zhuogeng lu* 輟耕錄 says: "In Yuan times any banquet given to the high officials was called a great assembly." If this is so, how does one know that this so-called "great assembly" was not a great assembly of the time of Taizong? Furthermore, the text of the *Yuan bishi* has a sentence which says: "Whenever the princes, the sons-in-law of the emperor, etc., assembled, it was inconvenient each time to collect taxes from the people." From this one can see that assemblies were frequent events; one can say that there were some every year, they were nothing extraordinary.... Someone might ask: "Granted it cannot be determined that the great assembly took place one year before Taizong (ascended the throne) – according to your opinion it must have been the year before Taizong died. But was there a great assembly at all at that time?" To which I answer, great assemblies were held very frequently and didn't mean any extraordinary event, as I have said before. The fact that the *Qinzheng lu* has no record cannot

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be used as circumstantial evidence that there had not been a great assembly. The *Qin-zheng lu* says in the last paragraph: "*Bingshen* 丙申, he went to Qara-Qorum. In the winter, in the 12th month, Küčü, Ködön, and others conquered Xichuan 西川. In the summer of *dingyou* 丁酉 he constructed the Sao-lin city (掃鄰城). In the fall, the 8th month, he selected the Chinese Confucians for the ranks of officials of their native localities. In the 11th month [he took part in the] great hunt. On the 7th day, he returned to a place called "yue-huo-ge-hu-lan"月惑哥忽蘭, [the same as e-tie-gu-hu-lan 鈘鐵鍔胡蘭 in the "Taizong ji" 太宗紀] and fell ill. The next day he died. He was aged fifty-six years and had reigned for thirteen years." This passage is very faulty. Among others, after *dingyou* no mention is made of the years *jihai* 己亥, *gengzi* 庚子, *xinchou* 辛丑 and their events. This shows that not a few of his feats have been omitted. How does one know that the great assembly of the year of the Rat was not among them? To sum up, the *Yuan bishi* can be trusted; the 7th month of the year of the Rat was one year before the death of Taizong.[8]

Chen Binhe is never at a loss for words in order to defend his theory that the year when the *SH* was completed was the year 1240, and his opinion that the year of the Rat mentioned at the end of the *SH* was the year 1240. We therefore have to go into an analysis of his statements:

1. Although the term "great assembly" in the quotation from the *Zhuogeng lu*, "Any banquet of the high officials of the Yuan dynasty was called great assembly," is literally the same as the term "great assembly" in the translation of *yeke qurilta* of the *SH*, § 282, they are in reality two different things. As mentioned before, the *yeke qurilta* which is translated as "great assembly" is an especially solemn great assembly for the highest affairs of state. But the "great assemblies" spoken of in the *Zhuogeng lu* were palace festivities of the Mongols. We know from historical sources like the *Yuan shi*, the literary collections of Yuan people, *The Journey of W. Rubruk*, etc., that the palace banquets to which the Qan of the Mongols invited the princes, the nobility, the high officials and the envoys of the countries were held frequently; they happened not only year after year, but were held many times every year.

The French missionary Rubruk who in May 1253, at the order of the French king Louis IX, went to the territory of the Mongols, arrived on December 27

8) Chen Binhe 陳彬龢, *Yuan chao bishi xuan zhu* 元朝秘史選注 (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1929), "Xin xu" 新序, pp. 26–27. Further, P. Pelliot remarks that because of the sketchy character of the *Yuan shi*, "Taizong ji" 元史，太宗紀 and the succinctness of its records, one can explain the reason why the *Yuan shi* did not mention the great *qurilta* held in 1240; his arguments in favour of the "theory of 1240" are to a great extent the same as those of Chen Binhe with minor deviations (see P. Pelliot, "Deux lacunes," pp. 1–2, n. 1).

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of the same year at the tent-palace of the Mongol Qan Möngke and left Möngke again on July 10, 1254. In the period of these six months Rubruk often went to solemn banquets to which the Great Qan Möngke had sent invitations.[9]

The Italian Marco Polo, who at the end of the 13th century lived in China for a long time, says, "The Great Qan of the Mongols holds a great feast thirteen times each year."[10]

Every year on the first day of the year, on the birthday of the Great Qan of the Mongols (or the emperor of the Yuan dynasty) and on the other feast days, at the time of the great hunt in spring and autumn, at the occasion of moving the residence, and other major activities, the Great Qan of the Mongols and emperor of the Yuan dynasty held great feasts in the palace and invited the princes of the clans, the nobility, the high officials, the envoys, etc. These were frequent events at the time of the great Mongol empire and the whole Yuan dynasty. One may even say that they were an institution of the Yuan dynasty.[11]

However, these common festivities in the palace, the great banquets and great assemblies are not to be confounded with the great assemblies for highest affairs of state. To say that these few great *qurilta* "were frequent events; one may say, they occurred year after year," does absolutely not correspond to the historical reality. Should the *SH* have been written during such a common palace banquet?

2. The term *juhui* 聚會 in the phrase of the original text of the *SH*: "Whenever the princes, the sons-in-law of the emperor, etc., *assembled* (聚會), it was inconvenient each time to burden the people with taxes," adduced by Chen Binhe, is in the original Mongolian text *či'ulu'asu* (the interlinear translation has *juhe* 聚呵) and not *qurilta*. It is apparent that in the *SH* the common assemblies and the *qurilta* or the great assemblies for highest affairs of state were distinguished by the words used.

3. Some of the blockprints of He Qiutao's 何秋濤 *Jiaozheng Yuan Shengwu qinzheng lu* 校正元聖武親征錄 which Chen Binhe quotes, have many lacunae and omit the events recorded for the *gengzi* year (1240). This prompts Mr. Chen to say:

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9) *Putešestvija v Vostočiye strany Plano Karpini i Rubruka*, tr. by A. I. Malein (Moscow, 1957), Russian translations from Latin, Soviet-Geographical-Papers-Edition (1957), pp. 145, 146, 158, 180; C. Dawson, ed., *The Mongol Mission* (London, 1955), pp. 160, 175, 201.

10) Feng Chengjun 馮承鈞, tr. *Make Boluo xingji* 馬可波羅行紀 (Beijing, 1954), ch. 86.

11) "Jing shi da dian xu lu, li dian, yan xiang" 經世大典序錄 ,禮典 , 燕饗: "When the country holds an imperial assembly or a congratulatory ritual, the princes of the clans and the high officials come to court; when, at the time of the birthday, they present their congratulations, they always hold a great banquet" (*Yuan wen lei* 元文類, *juan* 41).

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"It is evident that not a few [of his] feasts have been omitted. How does one know that the great assembly of the year of the Rat was not among them?" But some editions of He Qiutao's work, like the blockprint of the Lianchi 蓮池 Press of Guangxu 23 (1897), have the records of the *gengzi* year; further Wang Guowei's 王國維 annotated *Qinzheng lu* and the *Qinzheng lu* manuscript with collected notes for which Mr. Jia Jingyan 賈敬顏 of the Central Minorities Institute 中央民族學院 has made ample use of all the various extant editions (altogether over ten), have the record of the events of the *gengzi* year. However, in no record of the events of the *gengzi* year of all the editions of the *Qinzheng lu* is there any mention that a great assembly (great *qurilta*) had been held. Nor does the *Yuan shi*, "Taizong ji," which, just as the *Qinzheng lu*, is derived from the *Yuan Taizong shilu*, mention a great assembly (great *qurilta*) held in the *gengzi* year. Neither is there any mention of such an event in the *Sbornik letopiseï* by Rashīd-ed-Dīn, the minister of the Persian Il-Khan, who used as sources for his work the Mongolian *Veritable Records* of all the Mongol-Yuan Great Qans and the *Altan debter* (*The Golden Chronicle* 金冊). Equally all other pertinent historical sources are without any record of such an event.

Summarizing what has been said above, we know: in all the relevant historical sources there is in fact not any record of a great *qurilta* held in the year 1240 at Köde'e-aral on the Kerülen river. Therefore the theory which claims that the *SH* was written in the year 1240 is nothing but an unfounded conjecture.

Next, it can be seen from an analysis of the contents of the body of the *SH* that the *SH* was written several years after 1240.

The record of events of Ögödei's time in §§ 269–281 of the *SH* abounds with wrong informations. This could hardly be the case if the *SH* was written in the year 1240, at most five to ten years after the events described. For example:

1. The mission of Batu, Möngke, Güyük and Sübetei and other generals of the Mongol army and their departure for the second military expedition to the West is an event of the year 1235, after Ögödei had convened the second *qurilta*,[12] separated from the year 1240 by only five years. But the *SH*, § 270, places their mission and departure at the beginning of Ögödei's reign, immediately after he held the first *qurilta* in the year 1230. In addition, the *SH*, § 270, lumps together Sübetei's first Western expedition (1220–1224) at the time of Činggis-Qan with his second Western expedition (1235–1242), which he undertook together with Batu, and others, at the time of Ögödei, giving the impression that Sübetei had constantly been on the

12) *Yuan shi*, "Taizong ji"; *Sbornik letopiseï*, vol. 2, p. 36; *The History of the World-Conqueror*, pp. 199 and 269.

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Western expedition in Central Asia, Western Asia, Northern Asia and Europe without ever coming back, and that Batu, Möngke, Güyük and other leaders of the Mongol army had been sent to help him when the peoples of the various countries put up tenacious resistance. In reality, after Sübetei had come back from the first Western expedition, he played a very important role in the destruction of the Jin dynasty during the years 1230–1234, and only in 1235 was he again sent out, together with Batu and others, to lead the second Western expedition.

2. Ögödei's departure for the military expedition against the Jin in 1230, after he had ascended the throne, together with Tolui, is related in the *SH*, § 272, as having taken place after Batu and others had departed for the Western expedition (1235) and is wrongly assigned to the year of the Rabbit (1231).

3. The *SH*, § 272, even makes J̌ebe, Činggis-Qan's famous general who had already died in the year 1224 on his return from the Western expedition, the leader in the expedition against the Jin after Ögödei had ascended the throne.

4. The occupation of the Juyong Pass 居庸關 with J̌ebe as vanguard and the stationing of troops at Longhutai 龍虎台, which in the *SH*, § 272, is related under Ögödei's expedition against the Jin, is in reality an event of Činggis-Qan's expedition against the Jin in the year 1211 (see the *SH*, § 247).

5. The report of the *SH*, § 272, that Ögödei, when he went on his expedition against the Jin and had stationed his troops at Longhutai, fell seriously ill, is apparently also a later false rumour. According to the *Yuan shi*, "Ruizong zhuan" 睿宗傳, Ögödei personally took part in the expedition against the Jin during the years 1230–1232. When in the spring of 1232 the general conquest of the Jin dynasty had been assured of success, he returned from Henan back to the North. In the same year

> in the 4th month, he entered Zhending 眞定 from Bandu 半渡; he passed through Zhongdu 中都 and went outside the Great Wall. He stayed during the summer in Guanshan 官山. In the 5th month Taizong felt indisposed. In the 6th month he became very ill. Tolui prayed to Heaven and Earth and asked to be substituted for him.... After a number of days Taizong recovered from his illness. Tolui returned with him to the North.... He (Tolui) became ill and died.

One can see that Ögödei did not become ill at Longhutai during his expedition against the Jin, but after he had returned to the North to spend the summer at Guanshan to the North of the Great Wall.

6. The *SH*, § 269, gives even the wrong year – the year of the Rat – for Ögödei's accession to the throne, while in reality it was the year of the Ox (*jichou* 己丑 year, 1229).

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7. Furthermore, the matter of the quarrel between Güyük, Büri and Batu, reported in the *SH*, §§ 275–277, as well as Güyük's being recalled to receive Ögödei's reprimand, etc., can simply not have been written before the 7th month of the *gengzi* year (1240). On this point we will go into a detailed analysis later on. The contents of the *SH*, §§ 275–277, are also important evidence to prove that the *SH* could not have been written in the year 1240.

III

Several other scholars, like Hong Weilian 洪煨蓮 and Yao Congwu 姚從吾, hold the opinion that the date for the writing of the *SH* must have been the year of the Rat 1264, 1276 or some year of the Rat after 1276, because the place-names Xuande fu 宣德府 and Dongchang 東昌, which occur in the *SH*, §§ 247 and 248, only began to be used from the year 1263 on (Yuan Shizu 元世祖 Zhongtong 中統 4) and from 1276 on (Yuan Shizu Zhiyuan 至元 13) respectively.[13] Mr. Hong even thinks that in the year 1264 Arigh Böke 阿里不哥 and his followers, before they surrendered to Qubilai, held a great *qurilta* in Köde'e-aral on the Kerülen river and there decided on their surrender,[14] and that the *SH* was written at the time of this great *qurilta*. But Mr. Hong's view can only be called a conjecture because there is not any pertinent documentation.[15] In fact, according to all existing pertinent historical records

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13) *Yuan shi, juan* 58: "Dilizhi yi" 地理志一, "Shunning fu 順寧府 was called Wuzhou 武州 during Tang times; in the Liao period it became Dezhou 德州, in the Jin period, Xuande zhou 宣德州, at the beginning of the Yuan period it became Xuanning fu 宣寧府; in the 7th year of Taizong it was changed to Shanxi donglu zongguan fu 山西東路總管府. In the 4th year Zhongtong [1263] it was changed to Xuande fu and subordinated to the circuit of Shangdu 上都. In second Zhiyuan 至元 3 [1337], following an earthquake, it was changed to Shunning fu." "*Dongchang lu* 東昌路, *xia* 下 [a small "Route"] [was called] Bozhou 博州 by the Tang; in the Song period it was under the administration of Hebei Donglu 河北東路; in the Jin period it was under the administration of Daming fu 大名府; at the beginning of the Yuan it was under the administration of Dongping lu 東平路; in Zhiyuan 4 [1267] it was split off and became the Bozhou lu zongguan fu; in the 13th year [1276] it was changed to Dongchang lu."

14) William Hung, "The Transmission of the Book Known as *The Secret History of the Mongols*," *HJAS* 14 (1951), p. 492.

15) According to *Sbornik letopiseï*, vol. 2, "The Annals of Qubilai Qan," Arigh Böke, finding himself in a desperate situation, had no other choice but to surrender to Qubilai. Even if at that time a *qurilta* were convened, Arigh Böke and his partisans were so much in tension and taken up with considerations about their future, that they did not at all have the leisure to think about looking for people to write the *SH*. It is equally hard to assume that the *SH* had been written in a number of years when Arigh Böke and his followers established dominion over the area north of the desert and that it finally was finished at the time of *qurilta* in the year 1264. The arguments speaking against such a theory are the following: (1) According to the *Sbornik letopiseï*, the *Yuan shi* and other basic historical sources,

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there was no *qurilta* at Köde'e-aral from the year 1260 until the year 1323.[16]

Next, the Xuandefu which appears twice in the *SH*, § 247, is twice spelled as Sunǰitu in the Mongolian original text of the *SH*, § 247, which is excerpted in Blo bzaṅ bsTan-'jin's *Altan tobči*.[17] It must be a copying error for the original word Sundiǰu, which in a phonetic rendition may become Xuandezhou. The Mongolian language in the Uighur script of the 13th and 14th centuries used the same letters for *t* and *d*; thus one only needed to exchange the positions of *ǰ and d* to come to the erroneous spelling of the *Sunǰitu*. From this it can be seen that the original text of the *SH* had Xuandezhou and not Xuandefu. At the beginning of the Ming dynasty, because people were used to hearing "Xuandefu," the original word "Sundiǰu" was transcribed "Xuandefu."

The "Dongchang," which occurs three times in the *SH*, §§ 247 and 248, is three times "Dünǰü"[18] in the original text of the *SH* as excerpted in Blo bzaṅ bsTan-'jin's *Altan tobči*. This cannot be transcribed "Dongchang." The wrong transcription as "Dongchang" started also at the beginning of the Ming, because "Dongchang" was the name of a great place which one was used to hearing.

IV

Our investigation into the dating of the *SH* has as its basis the information given at the end of the *SH*, § 282, with regard to the time (the 7th month of the year of the Rat), the background (the convocation of a great *qurilta*) and the location (the great *ordo* of Činggis-Qan at Köde'e-aral on the Kerülen river). On the basis of all pertinent historical sources we must therefore first clarify how many *qurilta* were held at Köde'e-aral in the years of the Rat or very close to such a year

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Arigh Böke and his partisans had been busy for a number of years with combat and planning to lay the foundation for his reign by the use of their military strength; they had not paid any consideration to the question of civil administration and to the elaboration of a plan for lasting peace for their dominion; still less could they have paid attention to literary pursuits like the writing of the *SH*. (2) In the *SH* we cannot find even a single passage having anything to do with Arigh Böke; there is no reflection at all of the fight which took place between Arigh Böke and Qubilai for the position of Great Qan.

16) In 1260, Qubilai, after his accession to the throne, shifted the centre of his reign from the North of the desert to the Han area. From that time on, the great assemblies treating the highest affairs of state which were called by the Yuan emperors were on principle held in Dadu 大都 or Shangdu 上都. Only the *qurilta* of 1323, which supported Yesün Timür's (Taiding di 泰定帝) elevation to the throne, was held in Köde'e-aral.

17) *Altan tobči* by Blo bzaṅ bsTan-'jin, Harvard-Yenching Institute, Scripta Mongolica I (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), vol. 2, p. 68.

18) *Ibid.*, p. 69.

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during the 13th and 14th centuries. Thus we will preclude the possibility that our research into the dating of the *SH* might turn into speculations and suppositions disregarding the historical evidence.

According to the *Yuan shi*, the *Qinzheng lu*, the *SH*, J̌uwainī's *History of the World-Conqueror*, Rashīd-ed-Dīn's *Sbornik letopiseï*, Blo bzaṅ bsTan-'jin's *Altan tobči*, the *Altan debter*, written by another unknown author of the 17th century, and other relevant historical sources, there were three *qurilta* held in the 13th and 14th centuries up to the end of the Yuan dynasty (1368) in the great *ordo* of Činggis-Qan at Köde'e-aral on the Kerülen river, not exactly in a year of the Rat, but very close to such a year, either preceding or following it.

The first is the great *qurilta*, held from the 4th day of the 8th month of the year 1229 (*jichou* year) at Köde'e-aral in order to elect Ögödei. According to the *Sbornik letopiseï*, "The Annals of Ögödei," this great assembly was called "great *qurilta*."[19] It is also clearly recorded that in the third year after Činggis-Qan's death, in the spring of the year of the Ox, the princes and commanding generals from all places came together in the great *ordo* of Činggis-Qan on the Kerülen river.[20] According to *The History of the World-Conqueror*, during the first three days those assembled feasted day and night to their heart's content. Then after a few more days they came together and discussed the election of the Great Qan. The princes and others unanimously elected Ögödei. Ögödei firmly declined. Only on the 41st day Ögödei accepted the petition of the princes and ascended the throne of the Great Qan.[21] According to the *Qinzheng lu* and the *Sbornik letopiseï*, "The Annals of Ögödei," Ögödei ascended the throne on the 24th day of the 8th month of the *jichou* year (13 September 1229). Furthermore, Blo bzaṅ bsTan-'jin's *Altan tobči* and the *Altan debter* by an unknown author say that Ögödei ascended the throne in the third year, the year of the Ox, after the death of Činggis-Qan, at the age of 43, in Köde'e-aral on the Kerülen river.[22] Only the *SH*, § 269, and Saghang Sečen's *Erdeni-yin tobči*, *juan* 4, wrongly write that Ögödei ascended the throne in the year of the Rat.

The second was the great *qurilta* of 1251 (*xinhai* 辛亥 year), which was held in Köde'e-aral in order to elect and enthrone Möngke. The *Sbornik letopiseï* and

19) *Sbornik letopiseï*, vol. 2, p. 18.

20) *Ibid.*, pp. 18 and 19.

21) *The History of the World-Conqueror*, pp. 185–187.

22) *Altan tobči*, vol. 2, p. 111; the shorter *Altan tobči* by an unknown author, transcribed in Latin alphabet and translated by C. R. Bawden, *The Mongol Chronicle: Altan tobči* (Wiesbaden, 1955), § 49, p. 146.

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The History of the World-Conqueror both call this assembly a "great *qurilta*."[23] According to *The History of the World-Conqueror* the majority of the princes gathered at the Kerülen river, and on the 9th day of the 4th month of the 649th year of the Muslim era (1 July 1251, the 11th day of the 6th month of the *xinhai* year) Möngke was elected Great Qan.[24] According to the *Yuan shi*, "Xianzong ji" 憲宗紀:

> The princes and the great generals again held a great assembly in Kuotiewualan 闊帖兀阿闌 in the 6th month, the summer of *xinhai*, the first year, and together they elected the emperor and set him on the throne at the Onan 斡難 river.

According to the *Sbornik letopiseï*, "The Annals of Ögödei," Möngke ascended the throne at Qara-Qorum in the year of the Pig.[25] According to the above mentioned two *Altan tobči*, Möngke ascended the throne at Köde'e-aral on the Kerülen river on the 3rd day of the 4th month of the year of the Pig at the age of 45.[26]

The third one was the short *qurilta*, at the beginning of October 1323 (at the beginning of the 9th month of the *guihai* 癸亥 year), which was hastily convened at Köde'e-aral and which elected Yisün-Temür as emperor. The *Yuan shi*, "Taidingdi ji" 泰定帝紀 reports: "On the 4th of the 8th month of Zhizhi 至治 3, Yuan Yingzong 英宗 died; on the 4th of the 9th month (4 October 1323) Yisün-Temür, having received the news of Yuan Yingzong's death, ascended the throne at the Longju 龍居 river (that is, the Kerülen river)." According to the above mentioned two *Altan tobči*, Yisün-Temür Qan ascended the throne at Köde'e-aral at the age of 30.[27]

Let us summarize: according to the historical sources, in the 13th and 14th centuries up to the end of the Yuan dynasty, there were held at Köde'e-aral altogether three *qurilta*. Because the third *qurilta* was so short and held at such a late date, nobody has ever considered it as having anything to do with the dating of the *SH*.[28]

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23) *Sbornik letopiseï*, vol. 2, pp. 130 and 144; *The History of the World-Conqueror*, p. 562.

24) *The History of the World-Conqueror*, pp. 566–567.

25) *Sbornik letopiseï*, vol. 2, p. 132.

26) *Altan tobči*, vol. 2, p. 113; shorter *Altan tobči*, § 50, Bawden, p. 147.

27) *Altan tobči*, vol. 2, p. 117; shorter *Altan tobči*, § 51, Bawden, p. 148.

28) It can hardly be assumed that the *SH* was written as late as 1323. The *Yuan Taizu shilu* 元太祖實錄 was written in the latter part of the 13th century at the time of Yuan Shizu. If at that time the *SH* did not yet exist, how in the twenties of the 14th century, which were separated from the feats of Činggis-Qan told in the *SH* by hundred-and-some-ten-odd years, could somebody in the *SH* describe the feats of Činggis-Qan in a much more lively and richer way than the *Yuan Taizu shilu* (the contents of the *Yuan Taizu shilu* can be reconstructed to a great extent from the still existing *Qinzheng lu* and the *Yuan shi*, "Taizu ji" 太祖紀 which were part of the *Yuan Taizu shilu*, and from the *Sbornik letopiseï*, "The Annals of Činggis-Qan")? Apart from this, the *qurilta* which was convoked in a hurry to bring Yisün Temür on the throne lasted only a very short time. In such a hurry who could have

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The first two *qurilta* (1229 and 1251) were vast in their scope and lasted rather long. In the *Sbornik letopiseï* and *The History of the World-Conqueror* they are clearly called "great *qurilta*." Moreover, because they were not very far removed in time from Činggis-Qan, some scholars in the past argued that the *qurilta* of either 1229 or 1251 was closely related in time to the compilation of the *SH*, and consequently proposed either the year 1228 or the year 1252, respectively, as the date of the completion of the *SH*.

The first to propose the year 1228 was the late Qing scholar Ding Qian 丁謙. Later on, he was followed by the Japanese scholar Uemura Seiji 植村清二 in an article published in 1955; recently, the Japanese scholar Murakami Masatsugu 村上正二, in his annotated Japanese translation of the *SH*,[29] and the European scholars L. Ligeti, Igor de Rachewiltz, and others, have all adopted the theory proposed by Ding Qian which takes the year 1228 as the date of the completion of the *SH*.[30]

About 1901 Ding Qian said in his *Yuan bishi dili kaozheng* 元秘史地理考證 [Textual research on the geography of the *SH* of the Yuan]:

> The last paragraph of the *SH* clearly states: "We have finished writing at the time when the great *qurilta* was assembled in the year of the Rat." The year of the Rat was the *wuzi* 戊子 year. Yuan Taizu died in the *dinghai* 丁亥 year. At the great assembly of the following year the princes and nobles met together and deliberated about a new ruler. The book then was written in that year. It is evident that the author of the *SH* had served Taizu and that his writings came to a large extent from what he had seen and heard. Therefore he can absolutely be trusted.[31]

In 1927 Chen Binhe, in the new introduction to his selected comments to the *Yuanchao bishi*, criticized Ding Qian's opinion. Because the last paragraphs of the *SH* (§§ 269–281) relate events which happened after Yuan Taizong (Ögödei) had ascended the throne, Chen criticized Ding Qian's theory that the *SH* had been written in the *wuzi* year: in the *wuzi* year "Taizong had not yet ascended the throne

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had the leisure to talk about writing the *SH*? How could the *SH* have been written in such a short time? And, finally, this *qurilta* was held at the beginning of the 9th month of the *guihai* year (year of the Pig) which does not correspond to the statement in the ending of the *SH* "we finished writing in the 7th month of the year of the Rat."

29) Uemura Seiji 植村清二, "*Genchō hishi* satsuki" 元朝秘史札記, *Tōhōgaku* 東方學 10 (1955); Murakami Masatsugu 村上正二, tr., *Mongoru hishi* モンゴル秘史, vol. 3 (1976), pp. 378 and 395.

30) Igor de Rachewiltz, "Some Remarks on the Dating of the *Secret History of the Mongols*," *Monumenta Serica* 24 (1965), pp. 190 and 195.

31) Ding Qian, *Yuan bishi dili kaozheng* (Zhejiang tushuguan congshu ben 浙江圖書館叢書本), "Juan shou: *Yuan bishi* zuozhe renming kao" 元秘史作者人名考, p. 2a; see also vol. 1, pp. 20a, 25b.

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(he did so only in the *chou* 丑 year 1229); how is it that the events of Taizong's reign are also included?"[32]

Regarding this point Ding Qian's opinion was: "As the final writing of the *SH* took place in the 7th month of the year of the Rat (*wuzi* year), the report on the events of Taizong in this chapter must have been inserted after the book had been finished. As regards the three words, 'we finished writing' 寫畢了, they merely forgot to change them."[33]

Aiming at this theory of Ding Qian, Chen further elaborated his criticism: if the *SH* was completed in the *wuzi* year, "[then] I do not understand why the author wanted to include the second part of the 12th chapter (§§ 269–281, more than forty pages) as a supplement." And again, "After all, he could have placed this section after [the ending] or made it a separate book, why had he to insert it?"[34]

To Chen's criticism we can add the following points:

1. In the 7th month of the *wuzi* year (1228) there was no great assembly held. The great *qurilta* at Köde'e-aral which, according to the *SH*, § 269, took place in the year of the Rat after the death of Činggis-Qan, and which elected Ögödei as Great Qan, in reality took place from the 7th to the 8th month of the following, the *jichou* year (1229); the *SH*, § 269, wrongly refers to the preceding year.[35] If the *SH* really was completed in the 7th month of the *wuzi* year and provided with the ending, then how could the colophon "[we] have finished writing at the time of the great *qurilta* in the year of the Rat," have been written a full year before the great *qurilta* was held? And if the author finished his writing and added the colophon at the time of the great *qurilta*, which was held in the 7th month of the *jichou* year, a year of the Ox, then again, how was it possible that during that very year he mistook the year of the Ox for a year of the Rat?

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32) Chen Binhe, *Yuan chao bishi xuan zhu*, "Xin xu," p. 25.

33) Ding Qian, *op. cit.*, *juan* 15, p. 4a.

34) Chen Binhe, *op. cit.*, "Xin xu," p. 28.

35) The *Qinzheng lu*, the *Yuan shi*, "Taizong ji," and the *Yuan shi*, *juan* 115: "Ruizong zhuan," *juan* 120: "Zhenhai zhuan" 鎮海傳, *juan* 121: "Subutai zhuan" 速不台傳, *juan* 146: "Yelü Chucai zhuan" 耶律楚材傳 and other biographies, as well as stone inscriptions of the Yuan period like the ones collected in Song Zizhen 宋子貞, compl., *Zhong shuling Yelü gong shendao bei* 中書令耶律公神道碑, all record that Ögödei ascended the throne in the *jichou* year. Also the *Sbornik letopiseï*, "The Annals of Ögödei," and the two versions of the *Altan tobči* say that Ögödei ascended the throne in the year of the Ox. Besides the *SH*, the *Menggu yuanliu* 蒙古源流 also writes that Ögödei came to the throne in the year of the Rat. However, the *Menggu yuanliu* is full of errors with regard to the years of the accession to the throne of the Mongol-Yuan emperors (also in regard to other dates like the years of birth and death), and is therefore not reliable.

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2. The *SH*, § 198, says:

> [Činggis-Qan] captured some of the Merkit, and from the two wives of Qudu, the eldest son of Toqto'a-beki, Tügei and Töregene, he handed Töregene over as wife to Ögödei *Qa'an* 合罕.[36]

This paragraph calls Ögödei the *Qa'an*. From this it becomes apparent that the author wrote this passage after Ögödei had already ascended the throne (the 8th month of the *jichou* year 1229).

3. *SH*, § 251:

> Later Aqutai, the emperor of the Jin 金, detained J̌ubqan and other envoys whom (Činggis-Qan) had sent to the Song empire to demand its submission. In the year of the Dog, Činggis-Qan carried out another military expedition against the Jin and said: "(You) had already surrendered. How could you detain the envoys whom we had sent to the Song country?" When the war started, Činggis-Qan made haste to march to the Tong Pass 潼關, and ordered J̌ebe to occupy the Juyong Pass 居庸關. The emperor of the Jin, knowing that Činggis-Qan was hastening towards the Tong Pass, ordered Ile, Qada, and Höbögetür with their troops to fight against him. With the ***hula'an-degele*** [the red coat army?] as vanguard, the whole army came to fight at the Tong Pass and did not allow (the Mongolian troops) to come across. After Ile, Qada, and Höbögetür had been dispatched, the local officers and their troops quickly joined them. When (Činggis-Qan) arrived at the Tong Pass the Jin troops had already arrived and thronged the wide field. Činggis-Qan fought with Ile, Qada, and Höbögetür, and forced Ile and Qada to retreat. Tolui and Čügü attacked from the side and repulsed the ***hula'an-degele*** again forcing Ile and Qada to retreat and defeating them. The corpses of slain Jin soldiers lay in heaps like rotten wood. When the Jin emperor learnt that the Jin troops had been annihilated, he fled from Zhongdu and took refuge in the city of Nanjing [the city Kaifeng in today's Henan]....[37]

The writer has in this paragraph mixed up the events of two different battles by relating that Činggis-Qan attacked the Tong Pass and defeated Ile and Qada. In reality, this was not an expedition of Činggis-Qan himself. The two battles mixed up here are the attack on the Tong Pass and other areas by Samqa-ba'atur, the commander of the Mongolian army, in the 11th year of Činggis-Qan (1216), on the one hand, and the victory of Tolui, the commander-in-chief of the Mongolian army, over the Jin generals Yi-la-pu-a 移剌蒲阿 and Wan-yan-he-da 完顏合達 at Sanfengshan 三峰山 in Junzhou 鈞州 in the spring of the 4th year of Taizong (1232)

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36) Translated from the Chinese phonetic transcription of the original Mongolian text of *SH*, § 198.

37) *Ibid.*, § 251.

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on the other hand. The reports of J̌ebe receiving orders to occupy the Juyong Pass, of Tolui's and Čügü's combined attack, and the flight of the Jin emperor from Zhongdu and his taking refuge in Nanjing, are again evidently a confusion of events which took place in the 8th and 9th year of Činggis-Qan, respectively.

In conclusion, this paragraph contains events which took place after Ögödei ascended the throne. They could therefore not have been written down in the *wuzi* year when Ögödei had not yet ascended the throne.

4. Among the eleven tribes and countries of the Northwest, such as the Qanglin, against whom Činggis-Qan, according to the *SH*, § 262, ordered Sübetei (速不台 or 速別額台) to lead a punitive expedition, there are the Maǰarat and Keral, two names which point to Hungary. In reality, Sübetei's punitive expedition against the Hungarians was the second Western expedition which he undertook together with Batu and others after Ögödei had ascended the throne (see *Yuan shi*, *juan* 121: "Subutai zhuan" 速不台傳, *juan* 122: "Xuebutai zhuan" 雪不台傳). In this paragraph it has been erroneously recorded as Sübetei's first Western expedition at the time of Činggis-Qan. From this we can conclude that the events described in this paragraph could not have been written down in the *wuzi* year when Ögödei had not yet ascended the throne.

The account of this event in the present paragraph and the account of it in the *SH*, § 270, are consistent with each other; both confound Sübetei's first Western expedition at the time of Činggis-Qan and his second Western expedition at the time of Ögödei, and refer to them as one single event. This shows that § 262, which belongs to the records of Taizu contained in the paragraphs up to § 268, and § 270, which belongs to the records of Taizong contained in the paragraphs from § 269 on, do both not come from the pen of different authors of different times, but must have been written at the same time.

5. The *SH*, § 260, is wrong in talking about Muquli's presence on the battlefields of the Western region, and it is wrong in its report about his role in the affair of the conquest of Ürünggeči by J̌öči and the other two sons of the emperor and their subsequent audience with Činggis-Qan:

> The three sons of the emperor, J̌öči, Čaghatai, and Ögödei, conquered the city of Ürünggeči. The three of them divided among themselves the city and its inhabitants, leaving no part for Činggis-Qan. When the three princes returned, Činggis-Qan was angry with J̌öči, Čaghatai and Ögödei, and did not call them to an audience for three days. Thereupon Bo'orču, Muquli, Šigi-Qutuqu and others remonstrated with him....[38]

38) *Ibid.*, § 260.

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According to the *Qinzheng lu* and the *Yuan shi*, "Taizu ji," Jöči and the other princes' conquest of Ürünggeči and their subsequent audience with Činggis-Qan at Talihan 塔里寒 was an event of the *renwu* 壬午 year (1222). Muquli, however, in 1217 had received from Činggis-Qan the supreme command over the Mongolian and Chinese troops for the Southern expedition against the Jin emperor and held it up to his death in spring of 1223; he actually always remained within the borders of the Jin empire, occupied with his military expedition, and he never followed Činggis-Qan on his Western expedition (see *Yuan shi*, *juan* 1: "Taizu ji," *juan* 119: "Mugali zhuan" 木華黎傳).

The year 1222 was separated from the year 1228 (*wuzi* year) by only six years. If this book had been written in the year 1228, such a mistake could hardly have occurred. It could hardly be conceived that a compiler in the year 1228 would have allowed the famous Mongolian Muquli, who until a few years ago had been in charge of the expedition against the Jin, to appear on the far-distant battlefields of the Western region.

6. The *SH*, § 260: "(Činggis-Qan) sent Ötegedei Čormoqan on a punitive expedition against the Qalibei (= Caliph)-sultan of Baqtat (= Baghdad)," and the *SH*, § 270, are consistent with each other. According, however, to *The History of the World-Conqueror*,[39] the *Sbornik letopiseï*,[40] and the *Qinzheng lu*, this order was not issued when Činggis-Qan was still alive nor was it issued by himself; it rather was issued after the death of Činggis-Qan by Ögödei between the years 1228–1230. This shows that this passage too was not written down in the year 1228, which was close to this event, but many years later. Because there were many years between the events, it was possible to give a wrong report.

In conclusion, Ding Qian's theory, according to which the parts up to the *SH*, § 268 were written in the *wuzi* year (1228) and the events of Taizong in the parts from § 269 on were included later as a supplement, can hardly be maintained. Considering the fact that the events of Taizong recorded in the parts up to the *SH*, § 268, and the events of Taizong recorded in the parts from the *SH*, § 269 on, show very similar circumstances, it seems that one cannot categorically separate these two parts and think that they were written at different times which were relatively far distant from each other.

Some Japanese scholars (like Uemura Seiji) have made some modification to Ding Qian's theory, according to which the *SH* was written in the year 1228.

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39) *The History of the World-Conqueror*, p. 190.

40) *Sbornik letopiseï*, vol. 2, p. 21.

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Uemura Seiji held the opinion that the ten main chapters (§§ 1–246) of the *SH*'s twelve chapters were completed in the year 1228, while the following two chapters (*juan* 11 and 12, §§ 247–281) were written at a later date, namely 1257 or later, at the time when Yuan Shizu Qubilai was on the throne. At the same time, the colophon at the end of the *SH* was originally the colophon at the end of *juan* 10 of the main collection which later on was moved to form the end of *juan* 12 of the subsequent collection (see Kobayashi Takashirō 小林高四郎, *Genchō hishi no kenkyū* 元朝秘史の研究 [1954], chap. 6, and Uemura Seiji, "*Genchō hishi* satsuki" in *Tōhōgaku* 10).[41]

Such theories can only be considered as conjectures and hypotheses without much foundation. For this the following evidence should be considered:

1. To say that the first ten *juan* were written in the year 1228 and the two *juan* of the "subsequent collection" were written some 30 to 40 years later, when Yuan Shizu was on the throne, and to separate categorically the "main" collection 正集 from the "subsequent" collection 續集 and to assume that they were written at different times, some tens of years apart from each other, such a viewpoint does not have much of a foundation. The so-called "main" and "subsequent" collections represent only a distinction made by Ming people, while in the original Mongolian text there is no word indicating a distinction of a "main" and a "subsequent" collection. In the 15 *juan* edition of the *SH* there is also no distinction of a "main" and a "subsequent" collection. Besides, the ten first *juan* contain only half (the major half) of the history of Činggis-Qan, while the history of the 17 years from his 49th year on is basically written in the 2 *juan* of the "subsequent" collection. How can one assume that in 1228 only one half of Činggis-Qan's history was put into writing while the second half of his history was written several decades later?

From the style, the contents, the poems and songs which they contain, and other things, there is no adequate reason to maintain that the first ten *juan* and the last two *juan* (called the "main" and the "subsequent" collection) are two different works written at different times at an interval of several decades.

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41) Furthermore, the Japanese scholars Naka Michiyo and Ishihama Juntarō 石濱純太郎 think that the first ten chapters and the last two chapters of the *SH* were written separately on two different occasions. But their theory is not exactly the same as the one of Uemura Seiji. Naka Michiyo assumes that the first ten chapters were written during Činggis-Qan's lifetime, and the last two in 1240 (see Naka Michiyo, *Chingisu-kan jitsuroku*, "Joron," p. 3). Ishihama Juntarō holds the opinion that the first ten chapters were completed during some year of the Rat prior to 1240, the last two chapters in the year 1240 (see Ishihama, "*Genchō hishi* kō" 元朝秘史考, in *Ryūkoku shidan* 龍谷史壇 15 [1940], pp. 1–9). But their theory, which assigns a rather early date to the writing of the *SH* and for which they bring no sufficient evidence, can only be regarded as their conjecture.

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2. In the same way it is pure speculation to assume that the ending of the *SH* was originally at the end of *juan* 10 of the "main collection" and that it was only later transferred to the end of the "subsequent collection." In all extant editions of the *SH*, regardless whether it be the version of the *SH* in twelve *juan* or in fifteen *juan*, the colophon always stands at the very end of the whole book, namely in § 282, and not at the end of the "main collection" of the version in twelve *juan* or at the end of the last paragraph (§246) of *juan* 12 in the version in fifteen *juan*.

3. In the same way the assumption that the "main collection" (i.e., the first ten *juan*) as well as the colophon was written in 1228 (the *wuzi* year) cannot be made plausible, because the great *qurilta* which elected Ögödei to the throne took place from the 7th to the 8th month of the *jichou* year (1229), and it is extremely improbable that the scribe who wrote the colophon in the year of the Ox (1229) should have mistaken that very year for the year of the Rat (1228).

V

In his book *L'Empire mongol* (1941), the French scholar René Grousset voiced his doubts with regard to the theory held by many scholars that the *SH* was finished in the year 1240. He thought the *SH* could have been written in the next year of the Rat, the *renzi* year, which was the year 1252. His reasoning was the following: Ögödei's reflections on his actions while he was on the throne, recorded in the *SH*, § 281, have the semblance of having their origin in people's reasoning about Ögödei after his death.[42] There is, furthermore, in the *SH*, § 255, a dim allusion that the position of emperor in the future would pass from Ögödei's descendants to the descendants of Tolui.[43]

In the *SH*, § 255, after relating that in the year 1219 Činggis-Qan, before his expedition to the Western regions, designated Ögödei as his successor to the throne, Ögödei says to Činggis-Qan:

> "If after a long time my descendants [should turn out such that] even if they are wrapped up in grass, the cows would not eat, even if they are wrapped up in fat, the dogs would not eat, ... if they should bring forth such unworthy children and grandchildren, what will happen?" [Činggis-Qan answered:] "If Ögödei's descendants [should turn out such that] even if they are wrapped up in grass, the cows would not eat, even if they are wrapped up in fat, the dogs would not eat, will that mean that among my descendants there will not be a single good one?"[44]

42) R. Grousset, *L'Empire mongol* (Paris, 1941), p. 303, n. 1.

43) *Ibid.*, p. 230, and notes. Grousset's original text is simple and brief, and he only states in a simple fashion his point of view without elaborating on it.

44) New translation of the Mongolian original of the *SH*, § 255.

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This answer is the exact opposite of the oath which the princes and officials took when Ögödei ascended the throne. According to Rashīd-ed-Dīn's *Sbornik letopiseï*, when Möngke was chosen as Great Qan, Eljidai, a loyal follower of Ögödei's descendants from the tribe J̌alayir, voiced his opposition:

> "(When Ögödei ascended the throne) you have as one body decided and declared: when the time (to elect the Great Qan) comes, as long as it be a descendant of Ögödei, we will not be afraid if he were a lump of (stinking) flesh so that if in the future he were wrapped up in grass, the cows would not eat, if in the future he were wrapped up in fat, the dogs would be unable to cast a glance at him, we still will respect him and make him the Great Qan; no one else shall ascend the precious throne. Why have you today followed another pattern?"[45]

Comparing this account in the *Sbornik letopiseï* and the account of Činggis-Qan's words in the *SH*, § 255, and analysing it, I conclude that the words of Činggis-Qan in the *SH* are to a large extent a later fabrication. Because, according to the *SH*, §§ 254–255, when Činggis-Qan spoke these words, there were present Tolui, Čaghatai, Ögödei and others. If Činggis-Qan really had spoken these words, then how, two years after Činggis-Qan's death, in the year 1229 when Ögödei ascended the throne, would all the princes and nobles, including Tolui, Čaghatai and the others who then had been present, as one body unanimously have sworn an oath to Ögödei which was completely contrary to Činggis-Qan's golden words? How would Ögödei who always was careful in following his father Činggis-Qan's intentions, have accepted an oath which was contrary to Činggis-Qan's golden words?

This shows that the words of Činggis-Qan in the *SH*, § 255, are in reality intentional fabrications by later people. The fabrication of such words has the purpose of attaining an important political goal. It is evident that during Ögödei's lifetime nobody would think of fabricating such words. After Ögödei's death, and especially after Güyük Qan's death, Batu supported with might Möngke, the son of Tolui, against the princes of the line of Ögödei and Čaghatai and did not hesitate to start a fight for the position of Great Qan. With the intention of counteracting the oath that the position of Great Qan would forever belong to the descendants of Ögödei, as the princes and officials had sworn as one body when Ögödei ascended the throne, somebody fabricated these golden words of Činggis-Qan which not long thereafter were written down and included in the *SH*. Fortunately, Činggis-Qan, J̌öči, Ögödei, Tolui, Čaghatai, Bo'orču, Muquli, and others who were supposed to have been present at this scene thirty years earlier, had all passed away by the year 1250 when this story was fabricated, and nobody could come back to life in order to expose the lie of this fabrication.

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45) *Sbornik letopiseï*, vol. 1, part 1, Russian transl. by L. A. Khetagurov, p. 95.

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Furthermore, according to J̌uwainī's *The History of the World-Conqueror* and Rashīd-ed-Dīn's *Sbornik letopiseï*, the designation of Ögödei by Činggis-Qan as his successor occurred in the year 1227, not long before the death of Činggis-Qan, and not in the year 1219 before the Western expedition.[46] This shows that this whole passage of the *SH*, §§ 254 and 255, which says that Činggis-Qan, in the year 1219, before his Western expedition, gathered all his sons and designated Ögödei as his successor, has to a great extent been construed in order to fit Möngke's politics in his struggle for the throne.

The account of the *SH*, § 254, that J̌öči and Čaghatai started a fight when Činggis-Qan designated his successor, is also worth our attention. Before Činggis-Qan designated his successor he had his eldest son J̌öči voice his opinion. J̌öči had not yet spoken, when Čaghatai said: "To ask J̌öči to speak up, amounts to entrusting him (with the great position). He is a Merkit bastard. How can he be allowed to rule over us?"[47] Thereupon J̌öči flew into a rage, and grabbed Čaghatai's collar, and the two almost started to beat each other on the spot. This event did not necessarily happen in the year 1219, but it reflects a long-standing and deep-seated antagonism between the line of J̌öči and the lines of Čaghatai and Ögödei. Because J̌öči was an illegitimate son, Čaghatai and his descendants and Ögödei and his descendants despised J̌öči and his descendants; although J̌öči was Činggis-Qan's eldest son he met with rejection, and therefore his line could not inherit the great throne of Činggis-Qan, which of course caused J̌öči and his descendants to harbour ill feelings towards the lines of Čaghatai and Ögödei. During the time of Činggis-Qan and Ögödei, as long as the antagonism of the various families of Činggis-Qan's descendants had not yet reached an irreparable state, this kind of a family scandal could not have been exposed to the public, and a writer with even a little bit of sense for politics would not have dared to write about it. In the fight after the death of Güyük, when Batu and his followers supported Möngke and the princes of Čaghatai's line supported the descendants of Ögödei in their struggle for the imperial throne, and when the antagonism among the descendants of the various families of Činggis-Qan had assumed the form of bitter enmity and they ruthlessly brought charges against each other, only then could such a family scandal be publicly exposed and written into the *SH* by one of Möngke's paid writers.

Apart from this there still are many other places in the *SH* which reflect the fight for the position of Great Qan at the eve of Möngke's accession to the throne,

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46) *The History of the World-Conqueror*, pp. 181–183; *Sbornik letopiseï*, vol. 1, part 2, Russian transl. by O. I. Smirnova, p. 232; vol. 2, Russian transl. by Verchovskogo, p. 8.

47) New translation of the Mongolian original of the *SH*, § 254.

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and the sharp antagonism between the families of J̌öči and Tolui on the one side, and the families of Ögödei and Čaghatai on the other.

The *SH*, § 275, relates that Batu sent a messenger from the grassland of Kipchak to tell Ögödei that Güyük and Büri (the grandson of Čaghatai) had insulted him at the banquet after the conclusion of the Western expedition. The *SH*, § 276, relates that Ögödei, having heard this message, became very angry with Güyük and did not allow him to come to his audience. The *SH*, § 277, relates that Ögödei sharply rebuked Güyük to his face for being hot-tempered and arrogant and for bragging about his abilities, incompetent though he was.

In reality, the army led by Batu and the other generals on the Western expedition was constantly pushing their campaign (the Western expedition) from the year 1235 until in 1242 they received in Europe the news of Ögödei's death. They then returned, reaching the grassland of Kipchak in the year 1243. The report of the *SH*, § 275, that Batu, after the conclusion of the Western expedition, returned to the grassland of Kipchak and there held a banquet, must refer to the year 1243. But Güyük had already, as early as 1241, returned after receiving Ögödei's summons[48] and as a matter of fact did not take part in the banquet which Batu held in the grassland of Kipchak in the year 1243 after the conclusion of the Western expedition. Furthermore, the story that Batu was insulted at this banquet and as a result sent a messenger to Ögödei to inform him, is a strange thing. In the year 1243 Ögödei had already been dead for more than a year. How could he read Batu's message and become angry with Güyük and Büri?

Furthermore, from the time Güyük, together with Batu and the others, went on the Western expedition, he remained on the battlefields until the death of Ögödei, and he never could have seen Ögödei again. According to the *Sbornik letopiseï* and *The History of the World-Conqueror*, Ögödei, in the year of his death (1241), sent an urgent message to recall Güyük. Güyük, obeying the summons, returned and hastened back with the greatest speed. But a relentless fate did not allow him to meet his father again. Before he reached Emil 叶密立 he received the message that his father had died.[49] After Güyük had left for the Western expedition in 1235, he never saw Ögödei again. How could he have been reprimanded to his face by Ögödei?

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48) See *Yuan shi*, "Taizong ji"; *Sbornik letopiseï*, vol. 2, p. 118; *The History of the World-Conqueror*, p. 248.

49) *Sbornik letopiseï*, vol. 2, pp. 114 and 118; *The History of the World-Conqueror*, pp. 239 and 248.

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Furthermore, according to the *Sbornik letopiseï* and *The Journey of W. Rubruk*, the event of Büri's reviling Batu after drinking wine presumably took place around the time when Möngke ascended the throne. Not long after his accession to the throne, Möngke handed Büri over to Batu, and Büri was killed by Batu.[50]

All this shows that several incidents related in the *SH*, §§ 275, 276 and 277, in reality did not occur during Ögödei's lifetime. But in many circumstances of the stories told in these three paragraphs, we have a reflection of the sharp antagonism among the descendants of the various families of Činggis-Qan. The analysis of the very intentional depreciation of Güyük in the stories leads to the conclusion that the writing of the stories could not have been done while Ögödei or Güyük were on the throne. Many details of these stories appear to have been convenient to the political needs of Batu, who supported Möngke in his struggle for the throne of the Great Qan, and to have been fabricated for this purpose. Not long after Möngke's accession to the throne they too were written into the *SH*.

In the *SH*, Möngke's father Tolui is described as the only one among Činggis-Qan's sons who was all handsome without blemish and of high stature. The *SH*, § 251, relates that Tolui for his annihilation of the great Jin army under the command of Ile and Qada received from Činggis-Qan great rewards for his valiant fight. The *SH*, § 255, reports that Činggis-Qan, having designated Ögödei as his successor, asked Tolui whether he had something to say. Tolui said:

> "I will stand before my elder brother designated (as successor) by my father, the Qan; I will remind him of things he might have forgotten; should he be sleeping, I will wake him; I want to be his servant who obeys his orders; I will be his whip to urge on his horse; I will respect his orders and act upon them; I will never fall behind or fail to arrive when I ought to arrive; in protracted expeditions and in short battles I will do my utmost to kill (the enemy)."[51]

The *SH*, § 259, recounts that Tolui returned triumphantly and joined Činggis-Qan, having conquered Iru, Isebür, Sisten, Čükčeren, and other cities on Činggis-Qan's command. The *SH*, § 272, records that Tolui, when Ögödei had fallen gravely ill, showed an incomparably noble spirit of self-sacrifice, taking into account the good of the whole people and offering himself to die in the place of Ögödei, the highest lord of the Mongol empire.

Compared with the tall and brilliant stature of Tolui, all other sons of Činggis-Qan appear in the *SH* as dull and lustreless. For example, the *SH*, § 254, has

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50) *Sbornik letopiseï*, vol. 2, p. 90; *Putešestvija v Vostočiye strany Plano Karpini i Rubruka* (see n. 9 above), p. 125.

51) New translation of the Mongolian original of the *SH*, § 255.

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Jöči and Čaghatai get into a fight when Činggis-Qan designates his successor, thereby showing their rude and uncontrolled character. The *SH*, § 260, relates that Jöči, Čaghatai, and Ögödei, after the conquest of the cities of Ürünggeči, divided among themselves all the towns and their population, without leaving a single part to Činggis-Qan, so that Činggis-Qan became very angry with them and for three days did not admit them to his audience. The *SH*, § 281, relates that Ögödei had a weakness for alcohol, that he took a girl who belonged to his uncle Otčigin as his wife, that he killed Doqolqu who was faithful to Činggis-Qan, and other wrongs.

Analysing the accounts of the *SH* exaggerating Tolui's merits in battle, his moral excellence, and making him an outstanding figure while depreciating Jöči, Čaghatai, and Ögödei, it appears to us that the *SH* must have been written in the year of the Rat after Möngke had ascended the throne (1252), and not in the year of the Rat when Ögödei was still on the throne (1240) or in the year of the Rat one year before Ögödei acceded to the throne (1228).

VI

In conclusion, based on an analysis of the contents of a series of paragraphs of the *SH*, we propose that the completion of the *SH* in the year of the Rat following Möngke's accession to the throne, i.e. in 1252, is most in keeping with reason.

Finally, let us return to the end colophon of the *SH*. Is our theory, which assigns the completion of the *SH* to the year 1252, more in harmony with the ending of the *SH*?

The ending of the *SH* says: "We finished writing when they were gathered to hold the great *qurilta*, in the 7th month of the year of the Rat."

"When they were gathered to hold" is, in the Mongolian original, *quriǰu* 忽里周. The auxiliary verb *–ǰu* 周 or *–ču* 抽, an affix, mostly carries in the *SH* the meaning of an "ongoing action" (in Chinese expressed by the particle *zhe* 着) or sometimes of a "completed action" (in Chinese with the particle *le* 了).

See, for example, the *SH*, § 247, in the condensed translation of the early Ming period:

> In the later year of the Sheep Činggis-Qan undertook an expedition against the country of Jin. Having first taken Fuzhou and crossed the Yehu ling 野狐岭, he further, having taken Xuande fu, sent J̌ebe and Güyigünek as vanguard. When J̌ebe arrived at the Juyong Pass and saw the strength of the defence, he said....

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The "having taken 取了 " in "having taken Fuzhou" and "having taken Xuande fu" is in the Mongolian text "*abču*" 阿卜抽; the "he crossed" in "crossed the Yehu ling" has in Mongolian "*dabaju*" 答巴周; these three auxiliary verbs express completed actions taking place one after another and not several actions going on at the same time.

The *qurilju* in the ending of the *SH* also expresses a completed action and has to be translated "after the assembly had been held." The whole text of the ending has to be translated as follows: "After the great *qurilta* had been held, in the 7th month of the year of the Rat, when the tent-palace was stationed at Dolo'an-Boldaq-a in Köde'e-aral on the Kerülen river, between both Šilginček and..., we finished writing [this book]."

According to *The History of the World-Conqueror* and the *Yuan shi*,[52] Möngke was elected Great Qan at the great *qurilta* at Köde'e-aral on the first day of July of the year 1251 (the 6th month of the *xinhai* year). But the people who had taken part in the great assembly did not disperse very fast, because not long afterwards, the princes of the families of Čaghatai and Ögödei started a conspiracy and prepared a coup d'état. Möngke crushed the plot in time, arrested the rebels and punished many who took part in it with death. Thereafter Möngke kept the princes and nobles still gathered for a while in order to discuss ways of punishment.[53] This *qurilta* therefore lasted relatively long. According to *The History of the World-Conqueror*, it ended with all the princes departing before May 1252,[54] probably in spring 1252.

Why should there finally be mentioned in the ending of the *SH*, before the month and the year (7th month of the year of the Rat) of the completion of the book, the beginning of the geat *qurilta*? The main reasons for this are the following:

1. The writing of the *SH* had already been started around the time when this *qurilta* was summoned.

2. This *qurilta* was a solemn and high assembly which elected and proclaimed Möngke as Great Qan; the writer of the *SH* who was willing to serve Möngke's interests, deemed it necessary to mention this solemn and high assembly.

3. The duration of this *qurilta* was relatively long and the final dismissal of the geat *qurilta* was separated from the 7th month of the *renzi* year, when the *SH* was completed, by only a few months.

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52) *The History of the World-Conqueror*, p. 567; *Yuan shi, juan* 3: "Xianzong ji."

53) *Sbornik letopiseï*, vol. 2, pp. 136 and 137.

54) *The History of the World-Conqueror*, p. 597.

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Apart from interpolations and changes of single words and phrases by later people,[55] we have to think that the writing of the entire book of the famous classic of the Mongolian People, the *Secret History of the Mongols*, was completed in the 7th month of the *renzi* year, that is in August of 1252.

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55) The events of the *SH*, § 274: "Having first ordered J̌alayirtai-qorči to go on a punitive expedition against the Nüzhen and Gaoli, he now sent Yesüder-qorči as reinforcement, handing down a decree to display the *tamači* 探馬赤 in order to subdue their territory," according to the research of Japanese scholars, in reality occurred in the year 1257. This short record may have been mixed up and inserted as a correction by some later person after the completion of the *SH*.

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