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CLASSICAL ERA MONGOLIAN HISTORY WRITING AND A REVIEW OF MONGOLIAN SOURCES

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Abstract. Following their unification under Genghis Khan in 1206, the Mongols began an era in which they would play a very influential role in the course of history. Despite the existence of a negative perception of the Great Mongol Empire in the sources of the era, its impact on the political, economic, and cultural life of Eurasia has continued for generations. Although Mongolians adopted a writing system as late as 1204, the transfer of their oral tradition into writing lasted only a short time so that their historical heritage could be passed on to the next generations. The tradition of Mongolian historiography, which began with the creation of the stele known as the Genghis Stele, developed differently compared to other contemporary Asian states and it has kept this distinction until today. In addition to providing valuable information about the history of the Mongols and other nations they interacted with, historical sources written in Mongolian such as ‘Secret History of the Mongols’ and ‘Altan Tovch’ are also important milestones in Mongol historiography. Especially with works like ‘Altan Tovch’ and ‘Erdeniin Tovch’ being written during the period when Buddhism became widespread among the Mongols, the influence of Buddhist historiography on the Mongols became apparent. As a result, it is evident that grounds of legitimacy were strengthened in the actions of Mongol khans, especially Chinggis Khaan, and motifs indicating that divine power that was with these khans were added.

Keywords: Mongol, Mongolian sources, Inner Asia, Historiography, Lamaism

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Introduction

Mongols are one of the most important representatives of the nomadic civilizations. Even if they have much in common with Turks, their ancient neighbor and another representative of nomadic life in Asia, especially in terms of cultural characteristics, there are features that are different from those of Turks. One of the culturally common topics among the nomads is the writing of history. Even though it is very important that the nomads share a common historical heritage, the development of historiography, due to the nomadic life, occurred in a later period compared to non-migratory people.

Nomads in their historiography emphasized myths and legends that can be observed in sedentary civilizations such as Rome, Egypt, and China. The necessity to have links to sacred ancestors for the sake of the legitimacy of sovereignty exists in the writing of the history. But in a legend as well as a myth, we face the problem of determining time and location, just two essential requirements of modern history writing – due to the anonymity of myth and legend. In the late medieval era, especially among Mongols, we encountered a leader-centered, even sanctified concept of history supported by such myths and legends.

In general, the transition to written culture by the nomads happens later in other societies. Since the script was introduced into Mongolian culture late, Mongolian history writing began and advanced accordingly. It is impossible to speak of the same competence of history-making by nomads when it comes to their writing of history. Still, concerning history writing, Turks were one step ahead of other nomads. In fact, the utilization of script by the Mongols with whom the Turks share a common cultural and historical heritage falls into a much later period. The earliest written materials of the Mongols are only from the 13th century.

The script of the Mongols is a product of Sogdian script and was taken over by the Mongols from the Uyghurs during Genghis Khan's rule. The first time the Mongols had contact with the Uyghur script was dated 1204 when they captured the land of the Naimans, who were most likely of Turkic origin.

After capturing T'a-t'a Tonga, the seal-bearer of T'a-yang Khan of the Naimans, and the most trustworthy minister responsible for the treasury and finances, Chinggis Khan saw the seal of the Naiman Khan, asked what it was and thus began a significant process [1, p. 153]. Understanding the importance of a seal and of course the script, Chinggis Khaan asked T'a-t'a Tonga to teach that script to his sons and the other princes [2, pp. 452–453]¹.

Thus, the utilization of the Uyghur script began in the Mongolian palace, and later among all Mongolian noyans. But the Uyghurs, instead of writing the script horizontally and from right to left as did the Sogdians and Arabs, preferred to write vertically and from left to right as can be seen in the documents of the Turpan catalog. And the Mongols imitated the Uyghurs. But later on, they added a few new characters to their alphabet.

The Mongols, completing their unity in the kurultai of 1206 under the leadership of Genghis Khan, subjugated the Uyghurs first, and the Karluks, and then following a long struggle the Khwarezmshah. The Uyghurs and Karluks had voluntarily accepted the rule of Genghis Khan without a battle. But the aggressive actions of Muhammad

¹ The author of 'The Ta'rikh-i-Jahan-Gusha', Juwayni, sheds light on the Mongols' acquaintance with writing by pointing out that the Mongols did not have their own script, and Mongol youths learned writing from the Uyghurs. Additionally, he mentions that the steppe law known as the Yasa of Chinggis Khaan could only be put into writing during this period.

Khwarezmshah and his ambition to be a global conqueror cost his life and caused the invasion and destruction of Turkestan which used to be under Turkic rule for the last thousand years. This great victory won by Chinggis, and his sons encouraged the Mongols for their further actions. The Khwarezmshah campaign was described five years later in the Genghis Stele, the first written record of the Mongols.

The Genghis Stele, erected in this period, is, according to the present knowledge, the earliest (extant) written document of the Mongols. This stele is the most important manuscript for us, both for being a historical document and for mentioning the name of Khwarezmshah State. We also learn from this stone how the Chinggis administration considered important the Khwarezmshah State. Many scientists from various nations studied the Chinggis Stele. Esteemed Mongolists such as Schmidt, Vaanchig, and B. Dorzh, I. Klyukin, S. Murayami, Ch. Damdinsüren, Sh. Bira, D. Zhamsranzhav, and B. Rinchen are among the people who conducted the earliest studies on the Chinggis Stele.

The Chinggis Stele, erected in the year of the Kökhögchin Takhia (1225)² displays 21 words in 5 lines. It is the earliest discovered sample of Mongolian script. The stele does not mention Genghis Khan in its content; however, because the first line of the inscription starts with the two words ‘Čingis – qan-i (Chinggis Khaan’s),’ it was named ‘Chinggis Stele’ by I. Ya. Schmidt [3, pp. 243–256] and has been known by this name in the academic world. The stele was found in 1818 by the Russian researcher Spassky [4, pp. 108–121.] near the Khirkhira settlement, in the Transbaikal Region, which is part of the present-day Russian Federation. Since 1936, it has been displayed in the famous Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation. It is 202 cm. long, 74 cm. wide and 22 cm. thick.

Yesünhei Mergen was the second son of Jochi Khasar, brother of Genghis Khan [5, p. 54]. He was an excellent marksman. Yesünkhei Noyan was given the title *mergen*³, for hitting the target with an arrow at a distance of 335 *ald* (1 *ald* = 1 fathom ~ 1.6 m.) after a *kurultai* in a place called Bukha suchikhai (Bukhyn Khooloi) with the participation of all Mongolian Noyans. After his success, the stone known as Chinggis Stele was erected in memory of Yesünhei Mergen.

The script on the stele reads: ‘Chinggis Khaany Sartuul irgen daguulzh buuzh, Khamag Mongol Ulsyn noyadyg Bukha-sochikhai khurigdsan Yesünkhei ontudrun gurban zuun guchin tavan aldas dur ontudlaa (When Chinggis Khaan put Turkestan’s people under his control and gathered all Mongol Noyans at Bukha-sochikhai, Yesünkhei hit the target from 335 fathoms)’. The researchers accept that the stele was erected to immortalize Yesünkhei’s success in hitting the target from 335 fathoms. And it needs to be mentioned that the script on the stone starts with the words ‘Chinggis Khaan’, the reason it became famous as Chinggis Stele [6, p. 3].

1. Mongolyn Nuuts Tovchoo (Secret History of the Mongols) [7]

After the first written document mentioned above, perhaps the most important source about Mongolian History is the work titled Secret History of the Mongols (hereinafter SHM).

The work called ‘SHM’, which was known as *Yüan-ch’ao pi-shi* during the Ming Dynasty, was used to teach reading and writing in Mongolian to the Chinese and was used as a source book in the historical works penned in Chinese, however, its existing

² Year of the blue rooster.

³ *Mergen* is used in two meaning in Mongolian. First of these is wise, sage, and the other is the hitter. They style the champions in competitions the title of “Ulsyn Mergen (National Hitter)”.

copies began to disappear at the beginning of 19th century, and the work became a rarity. The copy which was found in the Peking Palace Library by Russian Sinologist Pallady Kafarov, then officially visiting Peking as the head of a religious group from Moscow in 1872, was brought to Moscow by him and is kept at the Oriental Department of St. Petersburg State University today. The present Chinese copy consists of the original Mongolian text and its transcription in Chinese ideograms, a glossary, and a Chinese translation of each chapter.

The work ‘SHM’ was first adapted into Modern Mongolian between 1915 and 1917, by the Mongolian researcher Tsen Gün (Duke Tsend). The importance of the Secret History among Western researchers was first noticed by Russian Sinologue Palladius⁴ who proposed a translation with Chinese explanations and glossary. The first translation into a Western language from the text adapted to Mongolian was made in 1941 by the German Sinologue Erich Haenisch [8] (using the 1937 print of the Mongolian text). Then, came a Russian translation in 1941 by Russian Sergei Kozin [9], a French translation in Paris in 1949 by the French Sinologue Paul Pelliot (he published the entire Mongolian text and the French translation of the first six chapters) [10]. Then Arthur Waley made a partial translation into English, but Francis Woodman Cleaves made the first English translation of the whole work. Again, the new English translation by Igor de Rachewiltz in 2003 in two volumes should be mentioned. It is very important in ‘SHM’ studies.

Today we possess translations of the ‘SHM’ into more than thirty languages. Among these possibly the most important for us is the Turkish translation published as ‘Moğolların Gizli Tarihi’ by our late Prof. Dr. Ahmet Temir (d. 2003) from the text adapted into Mongolian and using the German translation of Haenisch and the Russian translation of Kozin. The translation of the work into Turkish for the first time as early as 1948 is also very important for Turkish historiography. However, the first Turkish translation directly from Mongolian was made in 2011 by M. Levent Kaya. This translation will be published again soon.

‘SHM’ starts with legends that are among the oral traditions of earlier Turkic history. The first sentence of the work begins ‘Ancestors of Genghis Khan, Börte-chino (wolf) and Gua-maral (deer) that were born by the grace of High Heaven...’ [11, p. 13] The sanctified animals here, the gray wolf and the red deer occupy an extremely important position in Turkic cultural history, too. Again, in the same work, the episode relating to the legend of Alun-gua makes reference to a lineage from a ‘shar nohoi,’ [11, p. 16] that is similar to descending from the gray wolf.

The work is the most detailed source of the political and cultural history of the Khereid and Naiman tribes that used to continue a nomadic lifestyle in Central and West Mongolia during 12–13th centuries. They still exist within the Kazakh tribes today.

2. Arvan Buyant Nomyn Tsagaan Tüükh (White history of the ten goodness)

The work ‘Arvan Buyant Nomyn Tsagaan Tüükh,’ which is also known as ‘Tsagaan Tüükh,’ is one of the main sources in the fields of state, law, philosophy, history, and literature of the Mongolian nation.

Though the researchers agree that ‘Tsagaan Tüükh’ is the main source for history and law studies of the 13th century, some claim that the book was not written by Khublai Khaan himself, but by the advisers in his court and around him. ‘Tsagaan

⁴ Though he was known in Western Europe as Palladius, his real name is Peter Ivanovich Kafarov.

Tüükh' is known for its detailed explanation of how the law protected the rights of the nobility and clergy. It also sheds light on the purpose for which it was written.

Hutuhtu Sentsen Huntaiji, who governed the Ordos region, is the first known source of information about 'Tsagaan Tüükh'. It is understood that the work 'Tsagaan Tüükh' was extensively used by the famous historian of the 17th century, 'Erdeniin Tovch', in his book written by Sagan Setsen. In 1956, academician Sh. Natsagdorzh wrote the book 'Tsagaan Tüükhii Tukhai' [12], which also touches on the significance of this historical document. The third part of the book is particularly enlightening, and it includes a table of Mongolian titles and ranks.

According to Academician Sh. Natsagdorzh, the influence of Pagma Lama, who served under Khublai Khan is extraordinary, and some amendments were added during Tögsömör Khaan's reign (1330–1333). W. Heissig [13] and K. Sagaster [14] studied the work by comparing several copies. Also, scholars like Sh. Natsagdorzh, S. Zhalan-Aazhav [15], and many of others have studied this subject. In 2001, Ts. P. Vanchikova prepared a doctoral thesis on Tsagaan Tüükh in Russia. In the same year, Vanchikova analyzed the work with P. B. Baldanzhapov, annotated the translation of the work, and published it as a book [16].

The original of the book is kept in the National Library of Mongolia; it is covered in blue fabric on both sides, bound with fibre threads, and on its front cover, in black ink, it reads 'Mongolyn Arvan Buyant Nomyn Tsagaan Tüükh Orshvoi'. Books dimensions are 25.5 cm. x 26.5 cm. and includes 3 chapters in 48 pages.

An original manuscript of 'Tsagaan tüükh' was discovered by Zhamyan Gun in Ömnögovi Province and is preserved in the National Library of Mongolia.

3. Chinggis Khaany Altan Tovch Nertiin Tsadig⁵ (Tale of Chinggis khaan called the Golden history)

The work titled 'Chinggis Khaany Altan Tovch Nertiin Tsadig,' which varies from other sources written in classical Mongol script, format, and content, was discovered in the Black Jail in Arma Temple of Khavt Khasar, Darkhan Muumyangatkhoolboot province, Inner Mongolia in 1958. The sutra consists of 49 plates, 97 pages, and each page displays 14 lines written with a bamboo pen. According to the references of the work, the initial writing must have begun in 1260 during Kublai Khan's rule and was first compiled by one of the aides of Kublai Khan. This book contains 15 tales, and its content resembles 'SHM'.

Although it has not been thoroughly examined, scholars like Erdenetogtokh, B. Nasanbayar, and Kheshigtogtokh have made significant contributions to the study of this text [17, p. 4]. Professor Kheshigtogtokh suggests that it is crucial to acknowledge that the historical events documented in the 'Chinggis Khaany Altan Tovch Nertiin Tsadig' must have occurred before the events recorded in the 'SHM'.

In addition to these studies, Leland Liu Rogers [18], who has been working on this manuscript, also known as Činggis Qayan-u Altan Tobči, in recent years, has published the English translation, transcription, textual analysis, and annotations of the work.

Furthermore, the inscription of the tsadig is believed to have occurred after the reign of Khublai Khaan in 1260. This discovery sheds light on the early 17th-century historical narrative, making it a significant contribution to the understanding of Mongolian history. The 'Chinggis Khaany Altan Tovch Nertiin Tsadig' represents the original source of the 'Khuraangui Altan Tovch' in the history of Chinggis Khaan. In the later years, the seal became closely associated with the 'Khuraangui Altan Tovch'.

⁵ This word is introduced into Mongolian from Turpan Uyghur (chadyk), and it means the biography of important personage or high-ranking clergy.

Moreover, the *tsadig* serves as a valuable historical resource, alongside other significant works like Luvsandanzan's 'Altan Tovch' and 'Chinggis Khaany Tsadig', providing crucial insights into Mongolian history and culture [19, pp. 199–208].

4. Chakravardi – Altan Khaany Tuuj (Story of Altan khaan)

The sutra 'Altan Khaany Tuuj,' with its full name 'Chakravardi Altan Khaany Amidral-Erdeniin Toli Hemeeh Tuuj,' was discovered by a person called Mergenbaatar in the Khan Palace in the West Uzemchin County, Inner Mongolia [20, p. 3].

Each page of this manuscript consists of 54 plates and 106 pages measures 35x10.5 cm and contains 24–27 lines of text. This valuable document, which narrates the deeds and achievements of Altan Khan (1507–1581) in promoting Buddhism and Mongolian culture in poetic style, is currently preserved at the Library of the Social Science Institute of Inner Mongolia. This manuscript is a valuable historical document for researchers interested in the language, literature, history, religious and cultural significance of Mongolia through the perspective of Altan Khaan. It was first published in modern Mongolian script in 1984, along with explanatory notes and illustrations, under the title 'Erdene Tunamal Nert Sudar Orshiv' [21] in Beijing. It was later translated and published in Japan in 1985 and 1998.

In 2002, O. Darmabazar published a work titled 'Chakravardi Altan Khaany tuujiin sudlal' [22]. The work analyses various aspects such as language, history, and the context of traditional Mongolian literature. It provides detailed explanations and in-depth analysis. Scholars are currently evaluating the work, as they have been studying the era in which it was written. However, there is still debate about the author's identity. Scholars have not reached a consensus on whether the author was Altan Khan or not. The emergence of Tümed, the god of wisdom, and the diverse opinions on the term 'scholar' have yet to be resolved.

The work consists of 393 sections and is written in a refined manner. It is a significant contribution to the study of ancient Mongolian literature. It highlights the complexity of Mongolian poetry, poetic devices, interconnections, and the significance of traditional Mongolian culture. The selection of Mongolian literary devices, the author's unique perspective, and the emphasis on enhancing cultural heritage are key features of this pioneering work.

The author meticulously composed the work, altering the traditional approach to writing and modifying the positioning of contributors to the narrative. This sets a notable precedent for future studies in the field.

5. Khaadyn Ünsen Khuraangui Altan Tovch (Golden summary of basic compilation of khans) [23]

Three different historical sources known as 'Altan Tovch' in Mongolian history are distinguished by researchers with the names 'Khuraangui Altan Tovch', 'Lu Altan Tovch,' and 'Mergen Gegeenii Altan Tovch' due to the presence of the words 'Altan Tovch' in their titles. The oldest of these three works, which had a significant influence on subsequent historical writing, is a work written by an unidentified individual known by the full name 'Khaadyn Ünsen Khuraangui Altan Tovch' or by the short name 'Khuraangui Altan Tovch.' According to the research of the British Mongolist Charles Bawden, 'Khuraangui Altan Tovch' was written between 1604 and 1634 [24, p. 13].

'Khuraangui Altan Tovch' contains ancient historical legends, historical events from the Yuan Dynasty to the early 17th century, sacred writings, and oral narratives, resembling in many aspects the 'SHM.' According to the academic Sh. Bira, 'Khuraangui Altan Tovch' not only stands out as one of the oldest sources among the

Mongolian historical records (excluding ‘Tsagaan Tüükh’ from the ‘SHM’ but also represents the first book that combines Mongolian historical writing with Indian and Tibetan historical writing. The narration of the origins of the Mongol Khans in connection with Indian and Tibetan kings in the work can be explained by the influence of Lamaism [25, p. 211].

It is believed that while writing this work, the book ‘SHM’ was used along with other sources. These sources include ‘Altan Devter’ mentioned by Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlullāh in his work ‘Jāmi’ al-Tawārīkh’, mythical oral and written narratives, and literary works from the same era. Additionally, significant information about the history of Indian and Tibetan rulers was obtained from works such as Tsalba Gungaadorzh’s ‘Ulaan Devter (1346)’ and Shonnubal’s ‘Khökh Devter (1476).’ The renowned Mongolian researcher H. Perlee has revealed that the writing of this work involved drawing from the work titled ‘Arvan Buyant Nomin Tsagaan Tüükh’ [26, p. 14].

Two newly discovered manuscripts of the work are preserved in the Mongolian Fund at the St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies affiliated with the Russian Academy of Sciences under the numbers G-26 and F-25.

6. Shar Tuuj (Yellow story)

In 1891, Russian Turkologist Academician V.V. Radlov brought a Mongolian manuscript with historical content from Northern Mongolia, where he worked on the ‘Orkhon Expedition’. This manuscript, the first few pages of which are missing, entered the scientific literature under the name ‘Radlov’s History’ [27, p. 9]. This very old manuscript, which preserved many archaic features, immediately attracted the attention of Russian Mongolists. Moreover, the contents of this manuscript differed from all the Mongol chronicles known at that time in that it provided detailed information about the Khalkha khans and princes, as well as a large number of data on the khans’ mothers, wives, and daughters. More than a century has passed since then. During this time, other copies of this work have been found, and they are presumed to belong to a chronicle of the 17th or 18th century, namely Shar Tuuj.

To date, five manuscripts of Shar Tuuj have been identified:

Manuscript A: The manuscript brought by V.V. Radlov from the banks of the Orkhon River. This manuscript forms the basis of the present publication and is one of the three copies used by N. P. Shastina in his 1957 edition. [27]. It is kept in the Manuscripts Collection (B 173) of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences [28, p. 112, no. 443]. The paper of the copy measures 23.5x7.5 cm. and is a glued paper of Chinese origin.

Manuscript B: It was brought to Russia by A. M. Pozdnev and is preserved in the Manuscripts Collection of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (F 264) [28, p. 112, no. 444]. The paper of the manuscript measures 24x26 cm. and the manuscript is written on Russian paper. The copy consists of 41 leaves, but the first leaf is missing. The last part is also missing. The parts concerning the descendants of Chinggis Khaan’s younger brothers and the descendants of Jochi and Chagatai have been rearranged.

Manuscript C: In the A. M. Pozdnev Collection (C 33) in the Manuscript Fund of St. Petersburg State University. The paper size of the manuscript is – 22.5x36 cm. and the manuscript is written on paper of Russian manufacture. The leaves were sewn into a notebook with 43 pages. There are many abbreviations in the last part of copy C, especially in the information about the mothers and wives of Khans and Noyans.

Manuscript D: Preserved in the National Library of Mongolia. (Hist 46–371; former catalogue No: 6432). It was discovered in the Bayshintu Monastery in Mongolia [25, p. 245]. This copy is written on Chinese paper and measures 29.6x7.8 cm. This copy consists of 26 leaves and contains 29–32 lines per leaf. A facsimile edition of this copy was published by German Mongolist W. Heissig [13].

Manuscript E: This copy, discovered by the Mongolian historian S. Chuluun, belongs to Sh. Tserendoo from Tuv Province. This copy is written on Chinese paper and measures 34x10cm. The frame is drawn in red ink and consists of 32 leaves. In this copy, there are 26–27 lines per leaf on average. The first leaf with the title is missing. The end of the book is also missing. The seventh and eighth leaves are damaged. This copy was published by S. Chuluun Sh. Tserendoo in 2011 [29].

It is not possible to identify all the sources of Shar Tuuj. Ts. Zhamtsarano, W. Heissig, and other researchers after them found parallels in this book with ‘SHM’, ‘Altan Tovch’ [30, pp. 63–67] and Sagan-Setsen’s ‘Erdeniin Tovch’ [13, pp. 63–67]. The narrative about Chinngis Khaan in ‘Shar Tuuj’ is extremely short. This sharply distinguishes ‘Shar Tuuj’ from other Mongol chronicles of the 17th century. There are no stories about Temujin’s birth, childhood, and the chapters describing his victories are expressed in almost a few sentences.

Ts. Zhamtsarano, N.P. Shastina, and W. Heissig led them to the conclusion that all copies of ‘Shar Tuuj’ belong to a period not earlier than the 18th century and Sh. Bira considers copy B to be the oldest [25, p. 241]. Ts. Zhamtsarano was the first to suggest that the author of Shar Tuuj was Toba-taiji, whose name appears on the cover [30, p. 61]. The same assumption was repeated by N. P. Shastina [27, p. 10]. However, none of the different approaches to the texts has convinced us researchers about the authorship of the work. For this reason, the question mark about the author remains.

7. Sagan Setsen (Saghang Sechen) – Erdeniin Tovch (Jewel summary)

Written by Prince Sagan Setsen, ‘Erdeniin Tovch,’ is a historical and literal work covering a spectrum of Mongolian sources of thought concerning history, law, literature, and religious ethics in one work, written in a traditional history writing style.

‘Erdeniin Tovch’ is the most well-known work amongst 17th-century Mongolian history sources, translated into many languages, and is considered by researchers as the most important of the three sources of Mongol History. Researchers from East and West acquainted themselves with the traditional style of Mongolian history writing through ‘Erdeniin Tovch,’ approximately 40 years before the information about ‘SHM’ was published in Western countries. I. Y. Smith published the original and a German translation of ‘Erdeniin Tovch’ making it a basic source in Mongolian history research, early literature, and linguistics. For example, the famous Mongolist B. Y. Vladimirtsov used ‘Erdeniin Tovch’ as the primary source in his study ‘Formation of Mongolian Social Structure’ [31]. Academician Sh. Bira, in his work ‘Mongol’skaya istoriografiya (XIII–XVII vek),’ says ‘...Erdeniin Tovch can only be compared to the ‘SHM’ for its contribution to the development of Mongolian history writing’ [25, p. 275]. The work in question has been translated into Manchu, Chinese, Japanese, German, Korean, and partially into English, along with its original photograph, and has been printed numerous times. Additionally, the Russian translation has been completed and will be published soon.

Sagan Setsen’s work ‘Erdeniin Tovch’ was copied and distributed by a widely read figure among Mongolian nobles before it could be completed. As a result, many different copies of this work, written in Khalkha, Oirat, and Inner Mongolian, have emerged, making it difficult to determine which one is the original. Mongolian

historian Ts. Nasanbalzhir published the work in 1961 by comparing the four copies found in the National Library of Mongolia, written in classical Mongolian script. Additionally, there is a version of ‘Erdeniin Tovch’ translated into the Manchu language, most likely due to the Manchu Emperors’ interest in Mongolian history.

Prince Sagan Setsen is a 22nd generation grandson of Chinggis Khaan, born in the year of the Blue Dragon of the 10th sexagenary (1604), in Üüshin County, Ordos. Prince Sagan Setsen was awarded at the age of 11 by Prince Boshogt (Boshgot) as ‘Wise Prince’, a title of his ancestors. Wise Prince Hutugtai was, in his time, a very well-known man of literature and a soldier, and chief advisor to Tümen Zasagt Khaan. Prince Hutugtai re-compiled ‘Arvan Buyant Nomiin Tsagaan Tüükh’ from Khublai Khaan’s era and made it popular again.

Although Sagan Setsen completed ‘Erdeniin Tovch’ in 1662, it does not contain much information about the era following the Qing invasion. This act is interpreted as a silent resistance of the prince against serving the Qing Dynasty.

Carefully examining the style of how ‘Erdeniin Tovch,’ was written, we can conclude that Sagan Setsen had an excellent understanding of language and literature. The usage of earlier works from the 17th and 18th centuries and the parts added by the author are different in language and writing style. While writing his work Sagan Setsen took into consideration the pre-17th-century style.

The poetry at the end of the work tells us that Sagan Setsen began writing his work on February 11, 1662, and completed it on June 1.

The work consists of:

1. Formation of the world and beginning of humanity.
2. Era of the Indian Khanates.
3. Era of the Tibetan Khanates.
4. Era of the Mongol Khanates.
5. Era of the Qing Dynasty.
6. Poem

The most important part, of the Era of the Mongol Khanates comprises:

1. Börte Chinoa’s time till the death of Yesükhei Baatar
2. History of Chinggis Khan
3. The period from Ögöödei Khan to Timur
4. History of the Northern Yuan Dynasty
5. Period of the descendants of Batmönkh Dayan Khan
6. Descendants of Prince Barsbold, History of Ordos and Tumed.

Most of the part about Mongol history is dedicated to the Ming Dynasty period. Especially the period of Batmönkh Dayan Khaan’s unification of Mongolia, descendants of his ancestor Prince Barsbold, and events related to Binlig Khaan Altan and the Wise Prince Hutugtai are narrated in detail.

The work has been a source referring to many important events that are not mentioned in ‘Khuraangui Altan Tovch’, ‘Altan Tovch’ by Luvsandanzan, ‘Shar Tuuj’ and ‘Altan Khaany Tuuj’. Towards the end of the work Sagan Setsen mentions seven sources he used.

Although it is claimed that ‘Erdeniin Tovch’ has 30 original copies, most are reproductions of the original.

8. Zhamba – Asragch Nertiin Tüükh (History of the nurse)

‘Asragch Nertiin Tüükh (Asragchi nertü-in teuke)’ is an important document in terms of the history of the Mongolian language and has attracted the attention of researchers in a short time. The work’s original title is unknown, and the present name

was offered by scholar Kh. Perlee. It is confirmed that it was written in 1677 by a strong warrior called Zhamba, which is of Tibetan origin and is translated as ‘Asragch’ in Mongolian [32, pp. 1–5].

The chronicler, Asragch, was a Khalkha feudal lord who openly collaborated with the Manchus in their fight against the Manchu feudal lords of Oirat. Despite his political position, Asragch’s historical work is one of the Mongolian chronicles written with an anti-Manchu approach, which goes against the national interests of the country.

In terms of structure and content, Asragch’s work is similar to other Mongol chronicles of the 17th century. The work is not divided into chapters or sections, and the composition mainly consists of four parts – the preface, the ancient history of the Mongols, especially the history of Chinggis Khaan, the history of the Mongols from the fall of the empire to the middle of the 17th century, and the epilogue. In the poem at the end of the work, the author himself presents himself and clarifies the purpose of his writing: ‘I wrote this history called Asragch so next generations know.’

Asragch’s introduction is quite similar to the introduction of the ‘Shar Tuuj’ chronicle. The first part of the chronicle mainly focuses on the history of Chinggis Khaan. Asragch follows the traditional scheme of three monarchies but has a slightly different approach to the beginning of Mongolian chronicles. His chapters on the Indian and Tibetan kings are quite brief.

A comparison between ‘SHM’ and ‘Asragch Nertiin Tüükh’ reveals that 90 out of 282 paragraphs in ‘SHM’ are present in ‘Asragch Nertiin Tüükh’. Both works provide the same main information, and nothing in ‘Asragch Nertiin Tüükh’ is missing from ‘SHM’. However, many poetic passages in ‘SHM’ are not included in ‘Asragch Nertiin Tüükh’ and the few passages that are present have undergone significant revision. This proves that Asragch relied solely on the oral tradition of ‘SHM’, which connects with the first example of Mongolian historiography.

Asragch provides some legendary information about the expedition to the Tangut country, the death of Chinggis, and the transfer of his body to Mongolia towards the end of the history of Chinggis. This information, particularly the verse fragments, is strikingly similar to that found in other chronicles from the 17th century, including the anonymous ‘Altan Tovch’, Luvsandanzan’s ‘Altan Tovch’, and Sagan-Setsen’s ‘Erdeniin Tovch’.

As a result, Asragch paid considerable attention to the post-imperial period of Mongol history. It should be noted that in terms of completeness and value of the information reported, this part of his work far exceeds the main text of ‘Shara Tuji’ and is inferior only to the work of Sagan-Setsen. Asragch also reports some new data on the beginning of the spread of Lamaism in Khalkha. The epilogue, with which the author concludes his work, is interesting in composition. It briefly summarizes the conclusions, gives information about the history of the writing of the book, and wishes good wishes to the ‘Golden Lineage’.

‘Asragch Nertiin Tüükh’ is a 65-page manuscript that dates back to the 17th century. It is considered one of the most important source works of Mongolian history and is preserved in the Mongolian State Library Rare Works Library. The manuscript is in its original form and measures 9cm x 38cm in size, with 29–30 lines per page.

In 1937, the famous Mongolian researcher Ya. Tsevel provided detailed information about ‘Asragch Nertiin Tüükh’ [33]. Later, in 1957, Academician Kh. Perlee introduced the work, which he called ‘Three Previously Unpublished Manuscripts’ [34, pp. 3–5]. In 1960, he published it in the Mongolian alphabet and presented it with an introduction, summary, and notes as part of the Monumenta Historica series [35, pp. 1–5].

In 1983, the German Mongolian expert Hans-Rainer Kämpfe translated ‘Asragch Nertiin Tüükh’ into German and published it in the eleventh volume of *Asiatische Forschungen*, along with explanations and a comprehensive index [36].

In 2002, the Mongolian researcher Ts. Shagdarüren and South Korean Mongolian Mongolist Lee Seong-Gyu rearranged the text, all words, sentence structures, and visual elements of ‘Asragch Nertiin Tüükh’ to bring a new dimension to Mongolian history [37]. This helped examine the history not only from texts but also from real sources.

9. Gombozhav – Gangyn Ursgal (The flow of Ganges) [38]

The historical work ‘Gangyn Ursgal’ which tells the lineage and the history of Mongol Khans with absolute certainty has the full title ‘Chinggis Khaany Altan Urgyn Bichig Gangyn Ursgal Khemeekh Tüükh Orshvoi’. Gombozhav’s historical work ‘Gangyn Ursgal’ attracted the attention of Mongolists in the early period, and the text of the manuscript, with an introduction and notes, was published by L. S. Puchkovskiy [39].

The manuscript of ‘Gangyn Ursgal’ is kept in the Collection of Mongolian Manuscripts and Engravings of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences under the code G 294. The manuscript of ‘Gangyn Ursgal’ consists of 32 leaves. The original work by Gombozhav, covering more than 600 years of Mongol history, compiled chronologically from Sage Bodonchar to Ligden Khaan.

Some information about the author of this work can be found in the works of W. Heissig [40, pp. 53, 64, 73–75, 86, 90]. Heissig states that the author of this work, according to the colophon of the work, is ‘Taiji Gombozhav of the ‘Golden Lineage’ of the holy Chinggis Khaan’. According to other information, he had the title of ‘Prince of Guns’. Even during the Kangxi period (1662–1722), Gombozhav was recognized at the imperial court for his command of language, especially Tibetan. Emperor Yong-zheng (1723–1735) therefore appointed him head of the Tibetan school in Beijing. Gombozhav held this post for several years, leaving it in 1742 after completing the translation of a Buddhist iconographic work.

Prof. G. M Roerich, Gombozhav used Chinese dynastic annals and other works in this work. From the information given about Gombozhav and his works, it is clear that he was a versatile Mongolian scholar of his time, who was in close contact with and influenced by Tibetan and Chinese cultures. The date of writing of ‘Gangyn Ursgal’ is given in the text of the work as the 3rd year of the reign of Emperor Yong-zheng, i.e. 1725 [41, p. 195].

‘Gangyn Ursgal’ is not mentioned in the known Mongolian chronicles of the 17th–19th centuries. Nevertheless, this work attracted the attention of B.Ya. Vladimirtsov. In his work ‘The Social Structure of the Mongols’, several examples from Gangyn Ursgal are given, as well as a comparison of some Mongolian feudal terms with Chinese terms found in this work [31, pp. 130, 135–136, 152].

‘Gangyn Ursgal’ is a historical and genealogical work. According to the author, the work was written to satisfy many people who wanted to know the genealogy of Chinggis Khaan. The information about Chinggis’s ‘Golden Lineage’ in Gangyn Ursgal is mostly a listing of names, in some cases very detailed. However, only the basic elements of the biographies of most of the historical figures listed in the work are given. For the Yuan emperors, the author gives only the year of birth, the age of accession, and the date of death. A little more detail is given on Kublai.

The work is mainly regarded and used as a historical source. At the same time, it is of great interest as a cultural and historical monument. The information provided by

‘Gangyn Ursgal’ and other chronicles is very interesting for the study of Mongolian history and literature. Like the Mongolian chronicles of the 17th century, ‘Gangyn Ursgal’ contains both historical facts and legendary information. Gombozhav does not name the Mongolian sources he used. One of them is the ‘SHM’ is evident from the list of Chinggis Khaan’s ancestors and brief information about them.

The small work ‘Gangyn Ursgal’ contains valuable information about the Mongolian historiography of the 18th century: the tasks it set itself, its main ideas, the influences that affected it, the critical attitude towards the sources used, the historical and geographical point of view of the authors of the works, and so on. For this reason, the work deserves the attention of specialists in the field.

10. Lomi – Mongol Borzhigid Ovgiin Tüükh (History of Mongol Borzhigin line) [42]

One of the most important sources of Mongolian historiography in the first half of the 18th century, ‘Mongol Borzhigid Ovgiin Tüükh,’ was completed in 1732 by Lomi, the ruler of Khövööt Tsagaan County in Mongolia.

‘Mongol Borzhigid Ovgiin Tüükh’ briefly describes the history of Mongol Khanates from the establishment of the Great Mongol State by Chinggis Khaan to Ligden Khaan. The work, in addition to explaining how the Mongolian state tradition works, also shows the historical evaluation method of its time, using the Mongol historiography style of the 18th century, the era of the Qing Dynasty.

Lomi, concluding his work says ‘... after the turmoil years of Gegeen Ligden Khan, until the tenth year of Nairalt Töv, approximately 100 years have passed’. Therefore ‘Mongol Borzhigid Ovgiin Tüükh’ was completed in 1732. According to the statements of Naguusainhüü and Ardaazhav, the work was completed on August 1, 1735. However, on that day only the foreword was written.

The work consists of a foreword and three chapters. In the foreword, Mongolian history was briefly summarized just reflecting the author’s views about the events.

Chapter 1 of ‘Mongol Borzhigid Ovgiin Tüükh,’ informs us about Bodonchar, the forefather of Chinggis Khaan’s Borzhigin tribe, covering a period beginning from Mahasamadi, King of India to Timur.

Chapter 2 narrates the years of turmoil lasting for ca. 160 years in the Mongol State beginning from Biligt Khaan until the beginning of Batmönkh Dayan Khaan’s rule. The chapter ends with a list of descendants of Batmönkh Dayan Khaan, and the lineage of Mongol Princes in detail.

Lomi’s work ‘Mongol Borzhigid Ovgiin Tüükh’ covers a history of 32 khans, 22 generations and a total of 409 years. ‘Mongol Borzhigid Ovgiin Tüükh’ has both a Chinese and a Mongolian version.

The first publication of Lomi’s work by W. Heissig and C. R. Bawden is still used by Mongolists [43]. This book contains the facsimile edition of two texts. The first is a Mongol chronicle entitled ‘Mongyol Borzhigid oboy-un teüke’, and the second is a Chinese work, ‘Meng-ku shih-hsi-p’u’. This Chinese text was first published in Peking in 1939 and was soon recognized as an important source for later Mongol history, probably translated from an unidentified Mongol chronicle.

We thus have in one handy volume two texts completing each other and forming an ensemble of great interest to the students of Mongol literature and history. The Mongol text is a translation made in 1839 of a Manchu original written in 1732 by a Mongol belonging to the Borzhigid clan.

Short of giving a translation, the editors have done their best to make this edition useful. Heissig has provided a German preface to the Mongol text, whilst Bawden has

written an English introduction to two Chinese versions. A combined index of the proper names contained in both texts is also very helpful.

In 1989 and 2000, the manuscript was studied in Inner Mongolia and published with annotations, making it a significant work in the field [44].

11. Luvsandanзан – Ertний Khaадын Үндесlesen Төр Yosny Zokhiolyг Товчлон Khuraasan Altan Товч Khemeekh Orshvoy (The Altan Tovch which relates briefly the deeds of civil governing established by ancient khans) [45]

In the second half of the 17th century, Mongolian historians created original works of generalizing character, thus laying the foundation for such a type of historical literature as chronicles. It is interesting to note that at the described time the historiographical work of the Mongols, despite the spread of Lamaism, developed not only along the lines of church historical literature, as it was in Tibet, but also along the lines of secular literature, based on the traditions of oral and written literature.

The merit of creating the first such large Mongolian chronicle rightfully belongs to Luvsandanзан – the author of the original work ‘Shastra, called the Altan Tovch, containing a brief history of the state government founded by ancient kings’. But Luvsandanзан was not the only author of this work. He led a group of authors working on the first Mongolian chronicle, as evidenced by its colophon: ‘So the monk Shashana-dhara, known as Gushi Luvsandanзан, applied diligence to record the history of the origin of the remarkable, most sacred Hagan reborn based on many chronicles so that the great nation would continue to read.’ From these words we can conclude that under the direction of Luvsandanзан worked several assistant writers, perhaps, his students, on his instructions collected materials from different sources [25, p. 227].

Very little is known about Luvsandanзан’s biography. Colophon ‘Altan Tovch’ informs that he was a learned lama with the title of gushi. He was also known as Sumadishashanadhara, which is the Sanskrit translation of his name (Luvsandanзан). Some researchers have tried to establish the identity of Luvsandanзан and determine, at least approximately, the time of his life and activities. According to Ts. Zhamtsarano, was a writer and translator who lived in the 1650–1750 [30, p. 80].

The exact date of the writing of ‘Altan Tovch’, despite all the efforts of researchers, has not been definitively established. Following Ts. Zhamtsarano, many scholars (N.P. Shastina [46, p. 13], L. S. Puchkovskiy, Kh. Perlee, etc.) attributed this date to the beginning or the second half of the 17th century [25, p. 228]. Based on these considerations, we consider it most likely that Luvsandanзан wrote his work either at the very end of the 17th or at the beginning of the 18th century.

‘Altan Tovch’ is written based on the most valuable sources, which can be divided into two groups. The first group includes sources from the 12th–13th centuries, the second group includes Buddhist and Tibetan sources. The great merit of Luvsandanзан and his assistants’ lies in the fact that they managed to revive the original historiographical traditions of the Mongols in the conditions of foreign yoke and domination of the Lamaist ideology, using fully the sources of 12th–13th centuries. As noted above, such attempts had been made earlier, as early as the late 16th century, but at that time they could not withstand the onslaught of Buddhist-Tibetan literature that poured into Mongolia in connection with the spread of Lamaism. It is safe to say that the ancient monument of Mongolian historiography ‘SHM’ owes its second birth primarily to Luvsandanзан and his assistants. Researchers have irrefutably proved that out of 282 paragraphs of ‘SHM’, 233 were inscribed in ‘Altan Tovch’, and only very few of them underwent a slight reduction or change. Before Luvsandanзан, none of the Mongolian historians had used ‘SHM’ so completely. What is important is the very fact

that ‘SHM’ was not forgotten in Mongolian historiography, that this work, several centuries after its appearance, turned out to be the most important source of another major Mongolian historical work. We see in this fact the continuity of national traditions of Mongolian historiography.

It should be noted that the authors of ‘Altan Tovch’ used not only one ‘SHM’, but also other sources. This is evidenced by the presence in ‘Altan Tovch’ of such data that are absent in ‘SHM’, but are available in other sources, in particular in the ‘Jāmi’ al-Tawārīkh’ by Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlullāh.

Luvsandanzan’s work is not divided into parts or chapters. However, in terms of content and the nature of the materials, it can be divided into two parts: the ancient history of the Mongols (up to the second half of the 16th century); the history of the Mongols of the second half of the 16th and the first half of the 17th centuries. In the first part, the author endeavors to revise some issues of the ancient history of the Mongols from the standpoint of Buddhist historical and religious concepts. He begins the history of the Mongols in a different way than the anonymous authors of the ‘SHM’ did four or five centuries before him. In outlining the history of the origin of the Mongols and their Khans, Luvsandanzan is not content with ancient Mongol historical traditions alone, but goes beyond them and links them to the Indo-Tibet centric concept, according to which the history of the Mongols is an integral part of the history of the entire Buddhist world. Therefore, he prefaces the history of Mongols proper with a concise (only four pages of the manuscript) sketch of the emergence of mankind and the origin of Buddhist kings. Moreover, the author tries to ‘genetically’ connect the origin of Mongol Khans with the famous Mahasammata family using Buddhist mythological traditions [25, pp. 232–234].

The Mongolian historian did a very relevant work for his time, writing the history of the Mongol Khans when the power in Mongolia was seized by foreign conquerors. And it is no coincidence that in his conclusion he wrote of his wish that his history ‘should continue to be read by a great nation’. In a brief conclusion Luvsandanzan summarises what has been said in the pages of ‘Altan Tovch’. A characteristic feature of this conclusion is that the author links history with the present. He traces with great interest the genealogies of the Mongolian nobility up to his days and establishes the origin of the ruling princes contemporary to him based on historical data. Thus, the study of the historical past was ultimately dictated to Luvsandanzan by the practical demands of his time.

Altan Tovch has been printed multiple times. The first edition was published in 1937 in two volumes in classical Mongolian script [47]. Twenty years later, in 1957, it was published in Cyrillic Mongolian in Ulaanbaatar [48]. Another valuable translation was done by N.P. Shastina, as mentioned above, in 1973. Additionally, there have been translations in various languages, and further studies are ongoing.

12. Luvsandambizhaltsan – Ikh Mongol Ulsyn Altan Tovch Hemeeh Tüükh (History named the Golden summary of Great Mongol State) [49]

Other than being a cleric, Mergen Geegen (Wise Saint) Luvsandambizhaltsan, used to make translations and his work written in 1765 ‘Altan Tovch’ is known among common people as Wise Saint’s ‘Altan Tovch’.

Luvsandambizhaltsan, the cultural and intellectual leader of the Mongols in the 17th and 18th centuries, was a scientist, writer, translator, Buddhist monk, and artist. He was born in 1717 in present-day Inner Mongolia. Proficient in Mongolian, Tibetan, and Sanskrit, Luvsandambizhaltsan passed away in 1766.

He directed his studies towards exploring Mongolian traditions, the people's way of life, and Buddhist teachings, emphasizing the religious significance in Mongol culture and people's lives. Delving deeply into Buddhist teachings, Luvsandambizhalsan worked at the Merit Monastery and Ölzii Badarsan Monastery, utilizing Buddhist teachings in knowledge and education, making great efforts to better explain Buddhist teachings to the public [50, pp. 3–4].

The first mention of 'Mergen Gegeen Altan Tovch' was made by Russian scientist A. M. Pozdneyev in 1883. Pozdneyev obtained the manuscript in Mongolia in 1900, partially publishing the text. This manuscript consists of 54 pages and is preserved under the name 'Yeke Mongol ulus-un ündüsün Altan tobči orosibai' at the St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies affiliated with the Russian Academy of Sciences. In 1970, P.B. Baldanzhapov authored a book titled 'Altan tobči – Mongol'skaya letopis' XVIII veka' presenting photographs of the manuscript of Mergen Gegeen Altan Tovch and sharing his analyses of the text [51].

When writing 'Altan Tovch,' Mergen Gegeen extensively drew from ancient Indian chronicles, Chinese Annals, as well as Tibetan and Mongolian sources.

The work consists of two books, one of 15 chapters, about the Khanates of India, and of Tibet, and the other of 17 chapters detailing Mongolian History.

Chapters	Contents
1	discussed the reason and purpose of writing 'Altan Tovch'
2	commented on the formation of the world and the root of humans, according to Buddhist philosophy
3	told the separation of humans from each other and the formation of the line of khans
4	dedicated to the Khans of India from Mahasamadi Khan to Chiireg Teregt
5	listed Khans of India from Chiireg Teregt Khan to Goodam Toin, and the unjust execution of Goodam
6	relates about the Khans of India from Goodam's line
7	pegged to the origin of Tibetan Khanates
8	covered the history from the Khan Budegünzhal of Tibet to Erdene Alag, a.k.a. Ugalz Bat Khan
9	narrated the history of the khans from Erdene Alag Khan to Sronzangambo Khan
10	discussed the actions of Sronzangambo Khan, and the spread of Buddhism in Tibet
11	told us about Olontai, grandson of Sronzagambo Khan, and the further spread of Buddhism in Tibet during Gezegt Khan's era
12	mentioned Tisrondezhan Khan's era and the renunciation of Buddhism
13	contains the clash between the Bong belief and Buddhism
14	commented on the revival of Buddhism in Tibet
15	reported about Sadnaleg Khan of Tibet and his children; the origin of Mongol Khans
16	narrated Mongol Khans from Börte Chinoa to Bodonchar
17	described the youth of Bodonchar, the establishment of the Mongol State
18	covered Mongol Khans from Bodonchar to Yesükhei Baatar
19	about the children of Yesükhei Baatar
20	narrated the braveness of Khasar, Temüjin's punishment of a thief with the help of his brothers

21	mentioned details of the attack on Taichuuds, Khasar's great contribution to the battle with Naimans, Temüjin's anger for losing Huanjil Ilje and dispatching Khasar to Haruuna
22	told the invasion of Khereid, and a cooperation agreement with Tayang Khaan of Naiman
23	deals with Temüjin and Khasar ending their cooperation with the Naiman, the unification of Mongol states, and Temüjin becoming Chinggis Khaan
24	covered the conquest of Aluhai city of Xia State, attack on Golden State, retreat from Tangud before the end of the campaign
25	mentioned Khasar's death due to illness, Chinggis Khaan's passing following the conquest of Xi Xia State
26	has to do with the history of the Mongolian State from Elbeg Khaan to Batmönkh Dayan Khaan
27	about Ööld, Torguud and Khorchin near Khökh Nuur (Blue Lake)
28	about Muumyangan and the Lords of Khorchin
29–31	chronicles the lineage of Khorchin Lords
32	gives the lineage of Urad Lords and postscript

‘Altan Tovch’ is different than other works in content. Each episode ends with a poem as a summary of the chapter, and this also proves that the Wise Saint was a talented man of letters.

13–14. Rashpuntsag – Bolor Erikh (Crystal beads)

This manuscript has several versions. However, we do not know anything about the original version. This historical survey has been handed down to us through various written sources, but whether it is a complete and accurate account remains uncertain. After the first publication of the work was made in Chuulalt Khaalga in 1942, Western Mongolists such as A. Mostaert [52] and W. Heissig [53] also worked on the work and published it.

Khökh-Öndör, a famous researcher of Inner Mongolia, published ‘Bolor Erikh’ in 1985 in the city of Huhhot, using the manuscript published by Antoine Mostaert and W. Heissig, the Chuulalt Khaalga edition and the manuscripts found by Mostaert in Ordos.

A manuscript consisting of nine books originating from the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Oriental Studies was stored under the code F511, which was transferred from the Scientific Committee of the BNMAU in 1937. This manuscript is of great significance. This book, titled ‘Dai Yuan Ulsyn Bolor Erikh’, ‘Dai Yuan Ulsyn anhny ugaas naash üy zalgamzhilsan devter’ and ‘Dai Yuan Ulsyn Bolor Erikh khemeekh bichig’ is stored in the National Library of Mongolia under the codes 9216/97; 9218/97; 9220/97; 1431/96–1457/96.

The author of ‘Bolor Erikh’, Rashpuntsag, was the ninth-generation descendant of Alchubold, the fifth grandson of Batmönkh Dayan Khaan, and a descendant of Chinggis Khaan. Rashpuntsag wrote: ‘Day Yuan’ ulsyn Bolor Erikh’, beginning in the 39th year of God’s grace (1774) and ending in the 40th year of God’s grace (1775)’. In writing this book, Rashpuntsag quoted from the Beijing copy of the work ‘Khuraangui Altan Tovch’ in addition to the Chinese, Manchu and Tibetan sources. His work ‘Bolor Erikh’ consists of 5 chapters in 10 books:

The first chapter titled ‘Of Mongols’ deals with how the origin of Mongols is narrated in Mongolian and Chinese sources.

The second chapter titled ‘Origin of the Khans’ is pegged to the origin of Chinggis Khaan beginning from Khans of India-Tibet to Yesükhei Baatar

The third chapter titled ‘The Main Sutra of Dai Yuan State’ is the most important chapter telling the history beginning with Chinggis Khaan until Ligden Khaan

The fourth chapter titled ‘Lords of Later Periods’ mentions the events during the reign of Batmönkh Dayan Khaan’s eleven children.

The fifth chapter titled ‘The Other Lords,’ is the history of descendants of Jochi, and Tsagaadai (Chagatai), the eldest and second sons of Chinggis Khaan respectively, and of his brothers Khasar, Belgüütei, Khachigun and Otchigin.

Inner Mongolian researcher Buyanbaatar claims and provides evidence in his thesis ‘A Study of the Text of Short Golden Tovchoo,’ that Rashpuntsag used the copy of ‘Khuraangui Altan Tovch’ in Peking as a source when he wrote ‘Bolor Erikh’ [54, p. 5].

‘Bolor Erikh’, like most Mongolian chronicles of the 18th century, is characterized by a departure from the method of compilation of texts and the revelation of the author’s origin, literary treatment of historical and folkloric events.

One of the most important features of this work is the wide range of Chinese, Mongolian, Manchu, and Tibetan sources to which the author refers as mentioned above. Thus, the great influence of the Chinese and Tibetan literary traditions on the structure and linguistic means of ‘Bolor Erikh’ is usual. Rashpuntsag does not list the works he used but gives the names of most of them in the text of the chronicle. However, not all works can be identified by the titles given by Rashpuntsag.

Of great interest are Rashpuntsag’s critical arguments on various topics in which he expresses his position on the sources, characters, and events of Mongol history.

15. Darma Güüsh – Altan Khürden Myangan Khigeest (Golden wheel with one thousand spokes) [55]

One of the most important sources of 18th-century Mongolian history is the work of Darma Güüsh titled ‘Altan Khürden Myangan Khigeest.’

Darma Güüsh, born in Zharuud County of Zuu-Üde Province, was known as ‘Güüsh Choizhamts the Sage’. His work was written in 1739. Darma Güüsh specified the terms to be used in the Mongolian translation of ‘Danzhuur’ sutra between 1741 and 1749 and compiled the dictionary ‘Mergediin Oron.’ Darma Güüsh was a close friend of Gombozhav, the author of ‘Gangyn ursgal.’ Additionally, Darma Güüsh translated many medical sutras into Mongolian. It is possible that the translator of Subashid could be Darma Güüsh himself.

‘Altan Khürden Myangan Khigeest’ consists of nine chapters in 6 books.

The first three chapters are in the first book. He relates the formation of the world according to the ‘Avi Darma kosha’ sutra, followed by the Khanates of India and Tibet, and the history from Börte Chinoa to Yesükhei Baatar.

The second book contains chapters four and five and deals with the history until the death of Chinggis Khaan.

Chapter six in the 3rd book recounts the history of 16 khans in the Yuan Dynasty beginning from Ögöodei, the successor son of Chinggis Khaan, to Timur, and the 20 khans of the Dai Yuan Dynasty.

Chapter seven in the fourth book is the history of Batmönkh Dayan Khaan and his line.

Chapter eight of the fifth book is about the origins and descendants of Khasar, Belgüütei, Khachigun and Otchigin.

Chapter nine of the sixth book contains the differences among the ethnic groups in Mongolia, the 4.000 descendants of the Oirad line and the history of 13 shires under

the rule of Khasar's descendants. In Darma Güüş's work, some important historical events were mentioned for the first time, e.g., information was provided about the Tsahars, Khongirads, Üzheids, who were not mentioned in Mongolian or Chinese sources, and stated that Sartuul, Tangud, Asud, Khanlin, and Uyghurs were of Mongolian origin. It clarifies some controversial events between the 14th and 17th centuries, as well. According to Darma Güüş, Chinggis Khaan had named himself the 'Son of Heaven.' He was referred to as the son of Heaven in Chinese and Mongolian sources and was known as the 'Son of Heaven' among the people.

'Altan Khürden Myangan Khigeest' is one of the important sources of works frequently used by Mongolists both in their own time and in modern times. For example, in Rashpuntsag's 'Bolor Erikh', which we have described above, it is seen that Darma Güüş often quotes from 'Altan Khürden Myangan Khigeest'. The manuscripts of 'Altan Khürden Myangan Khigeest' were reproduced, and these manuscripts were widely spread.

Today we have 3 copies of this work. These are:

1. The copy found by Mergenbaatar and brought to the Institute of Social Sciences of the Inner Mongolian Academy of Sciences is kept here. Scientist Choizhi published the book 'Altan Khürden Myangan Khigeest' in 1987 in Huhhot, which he used as the main source and compared with other sources.

2. Another copy of 'Altan Khürden Myangan Higeest' is kept at the Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation. This manuscript was found in Inner Mongolia in 1925 by Russian researcher B. I. Pankratov and brought to the institute. This copy is clearly and legibly written in brush and consists of 9 chapters and 6 books.

3. The last copy we have is the copy with color photographs preserved in Copenhagen, Denmark. In 1938, K. Grönbech, head of the Department of Central Asian Studies organized by the Danish Geographical Society, took color photographs of the copy in the possession of the keeper of an old sutra called 'Khorchiny Sainbayar' in the city of Khaalgan. K. Grönbech then took these photographs to Copenhagen [56, pp. 3–8].

This last copy was published by W. Heissig and K. Grönbech in 1958 in the series 'Monumenta Linguarum Asiá Maioris' with photographs of the manuscript, introduction, names of persons and geographical places [57].

16. Chinggis Khaany Üy Uliralyg Temdeglesen Khaadyn Ündesnii Shastir – Khökh Tüükh (Main shastir⁶ of khans who recorded Chinggis khaan's descendants – Blue History)

Although brief, this work is one of the main sources telling the state and religious history of Mongolia, India, and Tibet. Because its several copies are named 'Khökh Devter,' it is confused with Shonubal's 'Khökh Devter'.

The author and the year of completion of 'Khökh Tüükh' are unknown. Looking at the note at the end, the work was completed before 1834. Considering the content, despite the fact it mentions the inauguration dates of Manchu Emperors, it does not provide information about Saishaal Yöröolt's era between 1796 and 1820 and does not list the descendants of Batmönkh Dayan Khaan. Bulag compared two copies of the work and opined that it was authored between 1796 and 1820.

According to Kh. Perlee, the work was written in the middle of the 17th century because Mongolian sources first mention the name 'Khökh Tüükh' in 1677 [58, p. 22].

⁶ A Buddhist term telling the story of religious or political personalities, also used in Classical Uyghur as "shastyr."

If we examine the phrase ‘Zhamba states that he completed his work in 1677, near Khangai Mountain’ in ‘Asragch Nertiin Tüükh,’ as a reference, but being uncertain whether the Tibetan or Mongolian ‘Khökh Devter’ is involved, the similarity to the Tibetan work written by Shonubal is obvious. Therefore, the accuracy of Kh. Perlee’s opinion is disputable.

Known copies of ‘Khökh Tüükh’ are:

1. Scholar Bulag discovered a brush-penned copy at Inner Mongolian Library, 24.5 cm in length and width, named ‘History of Chinggis Khaan, History of the Origins of Khans-Khökh Tüükh’, compared the copy with its equivalent in Saint Petersburg, wrote an evaluation, and published it in 1996 with the title ‘Khökh Tüükh’.

The above-mentioned copy, the oldest among other copies discovered so far, written in the traditional style, is the most detailed version with an introduction and an afterword. According to the afterword, this copy was produced in 1834. No previous versions are known.

2. One of the several works that Russian Mongolist A.M. Pozdneyev discovered during his travels in Mongolia between 1876 and 1878 the work that consists of three chapters and is registered with code number C-10 in the library of the Institute of Oriental Studies in Saint Petersburg. The end of the existing copy is missing, but we can say that the text belongs to the later period and some changes have been made in contents.

The part about Saishaal Yöröölt specifies that he reigned for 25 years, his son Tao Guan succeeded him in the year of the White Snake and governed for 30 years, and his grandson, Tügeemel for 11 years. These facts indicate that this copy was created between 1861 and 1875.

The manuscript copy found by Ts. G. Badmazhapov from Alshaa County consists of just one chapter and measures 15x24 cm.

In 1912, Buriad scholar Agvaandorzhiyev compared the 2nd and 3rd copies mentioned above and published in Saint Petersburg a work about Mongolian History consisting of three parts.

The 84-page book measuring 26x26 cm in the library of the Inner Mongolian Social Sciences Research Institute is a partial copy of Mongolian History.

The copy in the National Library of Mongolia titled ‘Khökh Devter’ with the code number 9516-97 is a copy of the 1912 St. Petersburg print and is a 23-page work measuring 13x22.5 cm [59, pp. 3–8].

17. Nata Gombovanzhil – Altan Erikh (Golden Rosary) [60]

The work titled ‘Mongolyn Shashin, Töriin Tüükh Suvd Erikh’ was authored in 1817, by Gombovanzhil of Züün Avganar County.

The book ‘Altan Erikh’ contains information about its author and the time it was written. Based on historical documents, the author, named Nata, was a descendant of Chinggis Khaan’s younger brother Belgüdey, held the title of ‘Beis’⁷ of Züün Avganar

⁷ The “Beis” is a type of Mongolian military rank that was established in 1636 during the reign of Manchu Qing. The title of Beis was initially used by the nobility of the Manchu Emperor, and it evolved to be awarded to Mongols in the south in 1636, to the Khalkha Mongols in 1691, and to the western Mongol nobility in 1755, reflecting the changing political situation. It was granted based on military merit and could be inherited or earned through personal achievement. Despite not having any specific responsibilities under the Manchu Emperor, those who held the title received various privileges and were entitled to a higher salary.

County, and lived from 1792 to 1827. Choizh analyzed ‘Altan Erikh’ and found important information about the author’s story.

According to the research of Inner Mongolian scholar Choizh, the work has 4 copies:

1. The copy in the Gandan Monastery’s library in Mongolia is the complete version with an afterword.
2. The copy is in the library of the Institute of Social Sciences, Inner Mongolia.
3. A 3-chapter version without an afterword in the Copenhagen Royal Library, Denmark.
4. The copy is in the Inner Mongolian Library.

Choizh compared the book with other works in the library of the National Academy of Sciences of Inner Mongolia and linked it with Chinese, Tibetan, and Mongolian sources.

Famous Mongolian researchers S. Natsagdorzh [61, p. 9] and Sh. Bira [62, p. 103] also studied ‘Altan Erikh’ in great detail. Although the sources used in the writing of ‘Altan Erikh’ are too numerous to mention, it is worth noting that most of its text is similar to ‘Gangyn Ursгал’ written by Gombozhav in 1725 and ‘Altan Tovch’ written by Mergen Gegeen Luvsandambizhaltsan.

The work ‘Altan Erikh’ consists of five chapters in three books. The first book deals with the History of China, and Mongolia, the spread of Buddhism in Mongolia, Chinggis Khaan and the khans of the Yuan Dynasty, and their history during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The second book scrutinizes the spread of Buddhism in Mongolia and examines the relations between Chinggis Khaan and Mönh Khaan, Güden Noyan and Sazha Bandid Gūngaazhaltsan, Khublai Khaan and Pagba Lama, Altan Khaan and III. Dalai Lama Sodnomzhamts. The third book studies the preparation of wooden blocks for the print of Ganzhuur Sutra in Mongolian translation, and the relations of Manchu Emperors with Tibetan clerics.

The manuscript describes the history of Mongolia and China and the relations between Mongolian and Chinese emperors and Tibetan abbots. It is significant for the study of the relations between Mongolia and Tibet in the 13th and early 19th centuries and the policies of the Chinese and Manchurian rulers towards Mongolia. It will also contribute to the elucidation of the origin of Mongolian Buddhism and the biographies of important Buddhist monks.

18. Gonchigzhav – Dai Yuan’ Ulsyn Suut Bogd Chinggisiin Suvd Erikh Khemeegdekh Shastir Orshvoi (The history called The Pearl Rosary of the illustrious khan Chinggis of the Great Yuan State) [63]

The work utilized the traditional Mongolian method of historiography commencing Mongolian history with the Khans of India and Tibet and is a significant source containing precious information with which we can confirm knowledge we obtain from other sources.

The author and the completion date of the work are mentioned at the end by the statement ‘...4th grade Lord Gonchigzhav the Sage, aide to Badrah, the ruler of Ih Züü County of Ordos, completed his work ‘Dai Yuan Gūrnii Aldart Bogd Chinggisiin Suvd Erikh Nert Tuuj’ in the autumn of the year of the blue ram of the 14th sexagenarian...’. We can conclude that ‘Suvd Erikh’ was completed in 1835 by Gonchigzhav of Ordos.

This work titled ‘Suvd Erikh’ has a total of seven copies. Three manuscripts are kept in the National Library of Mongolia, and four manuscripts are in the Copenhagen Royal Library in Denmark.

While writing this history, Gonchigzhav does not divide his work into chapters but applies a triple classification method from the expressions he uses in the text. In the work, Tibetan and Indian Buddhist creation myths are integrated with the legendary narratives of Chinggis Khaan's lineage in the 'SHM'.

'Suvd Erikh' is a text that has been reproduced and copied over the years. It was first published in 1927 by the Eastern Mongolian Writing Committee in Mugden, Inner Mongolia, using the lithographic method. Later in 1965, a photographic reproduction of the lithograph was published by W. Heissig in Wiesbaden.

A copy of the book printed in Mugden was kept by a person named Gendenzhav from the People's Court Committee of the South Otgi Province of Ordos. The Inner Mongolian researcher Sonom took this copy and republished the work in 1992. Despite the various publications of 'Suvd Erikh' in Inner Mongolia, researchers have always used only the 1927 lithograph copy as the original work [64].

In Mongolia, Kh. Perlee, in his work 'Mongolyn khuv'sgalyn ömnökх түүхх бичлэгийн асуудалд' [26, p. 19], gave detailed information about 'Suvd Erikh' as well as the sources of Mongolian history.

19. Ishbaldan – Erdeniin Erikh (Jewel rosary)

The book 'Erdeniin Erikh', which contains important information about the origin and history of Mongolian khans, the spread of Buddhism in Mongolian lands, and Buddhist religious works, was written by a Buddhist lama, Ishbaldan, who lived in Ordos in 1835.

Since Ishbaldan had the title of pandit, it is assumed that he was a wise monk who was educated in 5 important fields according to Buddhist traditions and had the right to use the books of the library without restriction. For this reason, it is normal for him to have used Tibetan sources as well as Mongolian in writing his work.

Due to the studies on 'Erdeniin Erikh', the texts that Ishbaldan used most while writing his work are 'Bagsamzhonsan' written by Sumba hamba Ishbalzhir from the Khökh-Nuur region and 'Shelzhimelon' written by Tugan Gegeen Luvsanchoizhinyam.

Ishbaldan's book, Erdene Erikh, has been studied by Mongolian and foreign scholars. One of the most important of these studies was published by the Russian scientist L. S. Puchkovsky in his book 'Mongol'skiye rukopisi i ksilografy instituta Vostokovedeniya' [65, pp. 58–60], which gives information about the full name, author, and year of writing of 'Erdeniin Erikh'. Among the Mongolian researchers, Kh. Perlee [26] carried out studies. Apart from these, another study on 'Erdene Erikh' is the work of the famous Mongolian scholar W. Heissig. W. Heissig, who noticed that there were two copies of 'Erdene Erikh' in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, selected a legible copy coded Mong. 420 and published the color photographs of this copy together with a preface in 1961 [66].

According to recent studies, the original language of the work Erdeniin Erikh, written by Ishbaldan, is not Mongolian but Tibetan. The work was even translated from Tibetan into Chinese. It is not known who translated it into Mongolian [67, pp. 123–124].

The work titled 'Erdeniin Erikh' has two basic chapters. The first chapter comments on the origins of Mongol Khans. This chapter covers a brief history of the Mongol Khans as the continuation of the Khans of India and Tibet, and the period beginning with Chinggis Khaan up until Dayan Khaan, and the lines of Chinggis Khaan's siblings ruling Inner Mongolia. According to the information the work examines, Timur and his predecessors are named 'great khans', and Timur's son and his successors are named 'junior khans'. Further information is provided for the states

and lands governed by Jochi and Tsagaadai, and principalities of Ööld, Zhungar, Torgud, Ordos, Otog, Khangin and Üüshin, about Galdan Boshgot's takeover of Khalkha, and Manchu army defeating the troops of Galdan Boshgot.

The second chapter of the work is titled 'Spread of Buddhism in Mongolia, Translation of Sutras from Chinese and Tibetan Languages.' It deals with subjects such as how a portrait of Buddha found within the Mongolian army in 140 B.C. is proof of Buddhism having been introduced to Mongolia before China; Mongol Khans invited Tibetan clerics to Mongolia; the strengthening of Buddhism following the invitation of the III. Dalai Lama by Altan Khaan after the weakening of traditional belief in Mongolia; the influence of IV. Dalai Lama Yondonzhamts, who was of Mongolian descent, in this development; the greatest sutras of Buddhism Ganzhuur and Danzhuur were translated into Mongolian; Buddhist monasteries such as Erdene Zuu were built; and the chaos and uprisings in Khalkha and Ööld.

Ishbaldan probably wrote this work during the Qing period to pass on the historical events of his time to future generations, to preserve their culture, and to strengthen their national identity.

20. Galdan – Erdeniin Erikh (Jewel rosary)

Galdan's work 'Erdeniin Erikh' holds a significant place in 19th-century Mongolian history and literature.

Galdan, from the Tüsheet Van County, Tüsheet Khan Province of Mongolia. According to Russian Mongolist A. M. Pozdneyev, Galdan, born around 1795, was 84 years old when they met in 1879 [68, p. x]. Galdan, proficient in Mongolian, Manchu, and Tibetan languages, occupied administrative and military roles from a young age, emerging as an intellectual figure of the era. While the exact date of his death remains unknown, it is believed to be in 1880 [69, pp. 3, 181]. He penned 'Erdeniin Erikh khemeekh tүүkh boloi' in 1841.

The 'Erdeniin Erikh' by Galdan, consists of two chapters. The first chapter tells the origins of the Khans of India and Tibet and the origin of Buddhism. The second chapter covers the history of Mongolia during the 17th and 18th centuries. This work is a precious source offering a large amount of information concerning the history of Khalkha Mongols in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Even though 'Erdeniin Erikh' has 14 copies, the original has not been found. Although the original manuscript of 'Erdeniin Erikh' by Galdan is yet to be identified, several copies have endured. Notably, 5 copies reside in the National Library of Mongolia, one in the Library of the National University of Mongolia (NUM), two in the Library of Oriental Department of St. Petersburg State University, four in the Library of St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies under the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), and two in the Library Institute for Mongolian, Buddhist, and Tibetan Studies of the Siberian Branch of the RAS.

There are five copies of the manuscript 'Erdeni-yin erike kemekü' in the National Library of Mongolia.

The first copy, 'Erdeni-yin erike kemekü teüke bolai', is the most comprehensive, with 472 pages. It is believed to be an expanded and corrected version by Galdan, not the original text. This copy is stored at number 52/96 in the library and was published by Ts. Nasanbalzhir.

The second copy, 'Ögüdei-yin erdeni-yin erike kemekü teüke bolyan biçigsen debter orusibai', is also in the same library at number 50/96, published by Ts. Nasanbalzhir in 1960.

The third copy, ‘Erdeni-yin erike kemekü degedü debter’, with a red cover, has 244 pages and is stored at number 1123/96 in the same library. There is another text, ‘Erdeni-yin erike kemekü dooradu debter’, 231 pages long, continuing this work, kept at number 1124/96 with a red cover.

The fourth copy, ‘Erdeni-erike kemekü teüke namtar ene bui’, has 217 pages and is kept at number 132/96.

The fifth and final copy, ‘Erdeni-yin erike kemekü teüke nige debter’, consists of 182 pages and is stored at number 88/96 in the library.

To mention the copies found in the Russian Federation; Library of Oriental Department of St. Petersburg State University under the numbers C-19 and C-37. These two manuscript copies of Galdan’s ‘Erdeniin Erikh’ were used by A.M. Pozdneyev and published in Russia in 1883.

The Library of St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies is affiliated with the Russian Academy of Sciences ‘Collection of A. M. Pozdneyev’s Compositions № 348’ under the title ‘Erdeni-yin erike kemegsen teüke’ in F-316. Another is preserved in the ‘Collection of Mongolika nova Compositions № 97’ at number G-246.

In addition to the 2 copies in the same institute, as mentioned above, 2 more copies are kept in the Institute for Mongolian, Buddhist, and Tibetan Studies of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences [70, pp. 4–10].

Russian Mongolist A. M. Pozdneyev was the first to work on Galdan’s ‘Erdeniin erikh’ and introduced this work to the scientific world. Pozdneyev, working on Galdan’s historical manuscript ‘Erdeniin Erikh khemeekh tüükh boloi’, translated the part about the history of the Khalkha Mongols for 100 years between 1636 and 1736 into Russian, added an introduction and explanations, and published the text with transcription in 1883.

A Russian researcher of Buryat origin, P. Baldanzhapov, conducted a comparative analysis of six different copies of ‘Erdeniin Erikh’ in the Russian Federation. He divided these copies into three groups: ‘first copy,’ ‘comprehensive copy,’ and ‘summarized copy.’ Baldanzhapov stated that Galdan’s ‘Erdeniin Erikh’ is of great importance in terms of Mongolian history, as it is a more comprehensive and extensive book compared to other source works of the period, such as ‘Bolor Toli,’ ‘Bolor Erikh,’ and ‘Suvd Erikh.’

In general, the most valuable work on Galdan’s ‘Erdeniin erikh’ is Ts. Nasanbalzhir’s work. 77 years after Pozdneyev, Nasanbalzhir published a comprehensive complete edition of the work on the 120th anniversary of its writing. In his work, Nasanbalzhir wrote that Galdan Tuslagch’s ‘Erdeniin Erikh’ will be a valuable and rich source of information for the study of the history of the Khalkha Mongols in the 17th–18th centuries.

The American researcher J. Fletcher [71, pp. 229–233] conducted his studies on Galdan’s ‘Erdeniin Erikh.’ In addition, in 1960, Ts. Ardaazhav published the text of ‘Erdeniin Erikh’ in Inner Mongolia in 1999 [72], with explanations and notes.

21–22. Zhambadorzh – Bolor Toli (Crystal mirror) [73]

At the beginning of the 20th century, Russian Mongolists introduced ‘Bolor Toli,’ one of the important sources of Mongolian history, to the world.

Zhambadorzh, the chief lama of Tuilyg Khamgaalagch Monastery in Urad County, Inner Mongolia, said about the work that ‘It is written for anyone who reads it to immediately understand as if looking at a crystal mirror’.

The original version of ‘Bolor Toli’ is still not found. There are six copies of the work of which three are in the National Library of Mongolia, and three in the Library of Inner Mongolian Social Sciences Research Institute.

Liu Xing So compared the three copies at the Library of Inner Mongolian Social Sciences Institute with each other, completed omitted passages and published them in 1984 [74].

At the time many articles about ‘Bolor Toli’ were in circulation.

Prominent German Mongolist W. Heissig translated ‘Bolor Toli’ into German and published it in three books including scientific addenda [75].

Although Russian academician B. I. Koroli made the first and only translation of the work in 1959 [76] and translated it with scientific clarifications, the translated text was published only in 2005, that is, after his death.

Since Lhavaarinchin, the ruler of Urad County, commissioned Zhambadorzh to pen Mongolian history, Zhambadorzh seems to be one of the sages of his time. His wisdom is noticeable in his work. The author provided a list of the sources he used.

‘Bolor Toli,’ in addition to Mongolian history, also composed the histories of India, Tibet, and China in detail, and told briefly the historical and geographical background of states in Asia and Europe together. Although the core subject of the work is religious history, important information about the history of states can also be found. The circumstance that the work provides together with the geographical distribution of Mongols, information about the neighboring states, as well as an innovative attempt concerning Mongolian historiography.

According to researchers, ‘Bolor Toli’ is one of the greatest accomplishments in Mongolian history writing.

In the foreword of his work, Zhambadorzh provided information about the formation of the earth, in parts I and II he wrote in detail the spread of Buddhism in India, China, and Tibet, and summarized moreover the biographies of outstanding clerics such as Zonhova and Atisha.

In part III, he penned Mongolian history beginning with Börte Chinoa era, and the 13th-century history of Manchu States. Mainly discussing religious history, Zhambadorzh also referred to political history, as well. The accentuation of the actions of Khasar, Chinggis Khaan’s brother, as much as Chinggis Khaan’s activities it makes one wonder whether he shares the same bloodline with Khasar.

As Sh. Bira also expresses, that Zhambadorzh’s mention of further world countries in his work is something not heard of before, in Mongolian historiography.

It is beyond doubt that this is a result of previous developments in Mongolian historiography and the contribution of earlier historians to this progress.

There are varying opinions among the researchers regarding the date of ‘Bolor Toli’s’ creation.

Kh. Perlee, pointing out to the phrase in the epilogue of ‘Bolor Toli’s’ copy in Dalanzadgad City Library, Ömnögovi Province, ‘... began on the New Year’s Day of the year of the Horse, and completed in the 5th month of the year of the Rooster,’ claims that it should have been authored between 1835 and 1838 [77, p. 82]. Russian scholar L. S. Puchkovski opposes this idea [78, pp. 222–223]. While Dr. Kh. Perlee’s opinion is correct, a mistake was made during the conversion from the former calendar to the new one. The correction of the mistake points to the years 1834–1837.

One of the three copies the scholar Lui Xing So evaluated was created by Gelen Gonchigzondui, who lived in the same monastery where Zhambadorzh used to. He added to the beginning of the phrase in the afterword mentioned above, ‘26th year of Tör Gerelt Khan (1846)’ in red ink [74].

23–25. Vanchinbalyn Inzhannashi – Khökh Sudar (Blue Sutra)

34 years old Inzhannashi, son of Vanchinbal Noyan, deputy administrator in Tümed County of Zost, continued the work ‘Ih Yuan Gürnii Khökh Sudar,’ his father had started. The first 50 chapters of ‘Khökh Sudar’ were completed in 1875. He discontinued writing ‘Khökh Sudar’ for ten years, resumed writing in 1883, and completed a total of 69 chapters until 1886. In 1891, escaping the ‘Xiaduihui’ turmoil, he moved to Xingzou City, but lost the outlines of his book in the following year, fell ill, and passed away on the 25th of February.

‘Khökh Sudar’s’ handwritten copies were being circulated among Mongolians until its publication, consisting of 69 chapters in 1939 and ensuing years. The present copy of the manuscript, according to Zh. Tseveen in 1909, is in 15 books at the St. Petersburg Library.

The copy consisting of 29 chapters in 15 books, titled ‘Ih Yuan Gürnii Tüükh,’ is in the Royal Library, Copenhagen, and is the exact duplicate of the copy published in Kailu.

An incomplete copy comprising 12 books and 18 chapters is kept in the Beijing Public Library, and a microfilm copy in Paris.

The National Library of Mongolia has a copy titled ‘Ih Yuan Gürnii Khökh Sudar’ including 12 books of 271 lines. Inner Mongolian Institute of Social Sciences has 8 copies. These copies are incomplete versions from the years 1930–1940, and some are identical with 1939 Kailu, some with 1928 Pekin and some with 1944 Chuulalt prints. But some reductions and add-ons in the text are clearly visible.

Though the 1957 print is almost the same of the Kailu print, there are many revisions in the 1981 and 1991 issues.

In addition to the existing 69 chapters in 3 books of ‘Khökh Sudar’ prints, there is a different ‘Khökh Sudar’ version, a 30-chapter substitute book of ‘Khökh Sudar’ known as the Tümed manuscript. During his visit to Inner Mongolia in 1942, German Mongolist W. Heissig photographed a 1400-page manuscript, found in the possession of a person called Heshinge. It is not clear what happened to its original. In any case, in 1958, a ‘Khökh Sudar’ substitute comprising 30 chapters in 10 books was found.

The first 60 chapters of ‘Khökh Sudar’ narrate the events in Chinggis Khaan’s era, and the last 9 chapters include the events after the inauguration of Ögöödei Khaan. According to some researchers, ‘Khökh Sudar’ has a total of 120 chapters, but it is hard to find evidence supporting this claim [79, pp. 8–12, 15–16].

Though Inzhannashi mentions that he utilized ten Mongolian historical sources while writing ‘Khökh Sudar,’ one can assume that he has used considerably more. For instance, ‘SHM’ was cited at the end of chapter 59, Iltgel Tüükh in chapter 5, Chinggis Khaany Mörgöliin Sudar in chapter 27, and 2 lines of Sagan Setsen’s poetry were used in the substitute book.

It makes sense that there are many more sources to be scrutinized to understand Inzhannashi’s work ‘Khökh Sudar’ in depth. This we can conclude from the 3rd book of the work titled ‘Tovchit Toli.’

It is evident from the work itself that ‘SHM’ was also used while writing ‘Khökh Sudar.’

In ‘Khökh Sudar,’ Inzhannashi wrote the life of Chinggis Khaan briefly and in the most accurate way. The author’s view and philosophy of life are well observed in ‘Khökh Sudar.’

26. Altan-Ochir – Bogd Chinggis Khaany Baildaany Bichig (Book of Chinggis khaan’s campaigns)

The author of ‘Bogd Chinggis Khaany Baildaany Bichig’ is Altan-Ochir, a 20th-century Inner Mongolian historian. The author was born in 1888, in Zost Province, Inner Mongolia [80, p. 3].

The objective of writing this work is to prevent the imminent collapse of the Mongolian state and to prepare a better future for it. The work was printed in Chuulalt Khaalga (Kalgan) on 25 September 1943. The author translated ‘SHM’ from Chinese into Mongolian, one year before beginning his work. He used his own translation in writing his work.

With this work, the life of Chinggis Khaan was penned for the first time by a Mongol author. The author, in addition to ‘SHM’, researched about 20 national and foreign works, thus examining Chinggis Khaan’s life in detail from his birth to his death, described the wisdom and courage of Chinggis Khaan, emphasizing that Chinggis Khaan rightfully united the world nations to establish a greater state and that he was a great statesman and army commander. According to the author’s interpretation, globalization was the purpose of Chinggis Khaan’s policies and that at the end he had reached his goal. In support of his thesis, the author studied Chinggis Khaan’s battles in detail and concluded that it is inevitable for a state about to collapse to be taken over by a stronger one.

The author also mentions ‘Ikh Zasag’, the army code. In addition to commenting on historical events in the work, the author expresses his opinions about those as well. He also criticizes the works of a few western researchers as ‘incredible’.

The fact that Altan-Ochir wrote the names of persons, locations, and cities in Latin letters, and sometimes in Chinese characters, are in unison with present scientific standards.

‘Bogd Chinggis Khaany Baildaany Bichig’ incorporated events not included in other sources. In ‘Bogd Chinggis Khaany Baildaany Bichig,’ the history of Chinggis Khaan and Mongolia is written in a different aspect. The author critically assessed historical sources, attempted to soundly evaluate historical events, and provided new and interesting evidence.

27–28. Mongol Ulsyn Shastir (Historical past of Mongolia)

‘Mongol Ulsyn Shastir,’ consisting of 11 books, is one of the most important sources of Mongolian history. It was written between 1918 and 1919 by a group of historians after a decree from Bogd Khaan.

To write the ‘Mongol Ulsyn Shastir’, it was necessary to consult several different sources, including records of ‘Noyans, taijis, noble incarnations’ from the four provinces of Khalkha, the two provinces of Dörvöd, Ikh Shav, and other regions. In addition, numerous ancient sutras, particularly the ‘Zarlīgaar togtooson Gadaad Mongol, Khoton aymagiin van güngüüdiin iltgel shastir’ composed during the Manchu Empire, were employed.

The historians were headed by Lama Tserendendev. Only seven books have reached our day and are in the National Library of Mongolia. The books measure 26x25 cm, and the cover is wrapped in yellow fabric outside, and blue fabric inside. Each page has 10 lines, and each line contains 7–8 words, written in black ink. Some of the books have page numbers in red or black ink. The page numbers might have been recent additions.

‘Mongol Ulsyn Shastir’ lists chronologically the biographies of Mongol Khans who lived between 17th and 20th centuries. This work also includes the Mongolian administrative institutions, counties, and several monasteries of that period.

The work ‘Mongol Ulsyn Shastir’ provides invaluable information regarding the organization and number of Mongolian administrations, districts and towns, Buddhist temples, and chronicles in the period in question. ‘Mongol ulsyn shastir’ was first published by academician Kh. Perlee and Sh. Bira initially analyzed the work from a historiographical perspective and provided some evaluations. However, the full text was not published and did not enter the academic circulation. In 1997, the Institute of History of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences published a small portion of the work in Cyrillic, but today it is no longer possible to access these publications [81, pp. 3–5].

29. L. Dendev – Mongolyn Tovch Tüükh (A Short history of Mongolia) [10]

The work ‘Mongolyn Tovch Tüükh,’ a publication by L. Dendev (1895–1957), a Mongolian politician and scientist, examined especially the history of 20th century Mongolia under Bogd Khaan, and its value increases each day.

The main theme of the work is Mongolia’s independence from China and Manchus, the opinions of contemporary politicians, social conditions, and domestic and foreign policies, all expressed in realistic language by an eyewitness of the era.

During the reformation of the newly established Mongolian state, L. Dendev, despite the shortage of humans and other factors, struggled beyond his capacity, without neglecting his research. He gave his work ‘Mongolyn Tovch Tüükh’ to print in 1934, and published numerous articles and papers emphasizing steps to be taken to examine the social structure of 17th to 19th century Mongolia, and the protection of traditional culture.

Dendev’s work ‘Mongolyn Tovch Tüükh’ covers the years 1911–1921. The author omitted his own opinion regarding the collection of contracts, documents, notes, and letters about how Mongolia could become an autonomous country. Therefore, this work could be considered a compilation of documents. Due to the revolutionary actions of the period in the country, he left out the history of the Mongol Khanates and described the Mongol history within a realistic avenue that could be seen as a turning point in Mongolian historiography at a time when materialistic and dialectic approaches were beginning to be accepted. He wrote his work using earlier historical sources and archive documents of his time, a new development in Mongolian historiography and convenience for researchers.

L. Dendev witnessed historical events between 1911 and 1921, so he was aware of the events’ details and since he made a correct choice of style when writing about history, ‘Mongolyn Tovch Tüükh’ stands out as an extremely important study. L. Dendev lived during the years of socialism and was an employee of the socialist state. He knew the difference between history and story, compared to historians before him, and used this capability to describe historical events realistically.

Other scholars’ commentaries about his work vary in content; however, the work itself is seen as a basic source of the first half of 20th-century research.

It is seemingly a very successful work, because 1) a large amount of archive material was browsed and used; 2) the author was an eyewitness of the events in 1911–1921; 3) the events were commented upon by a Mongolian; and, 4) realistic comments were made involving important persons who participated in the events [82, pp. 11, 13–16].

Although the work was completed in a very short time, it offers a lot of information, contains short commentary about a few incidents, and the description of

events is authentic. Furthermore, during the preparation, the information in the work was compared with foreign sources and is the first book published in Mongolia that includes pictures.

30. A. Amar – Mongolyn Tovch Tüükh (A Short history of Mongolia)

Prof. A. Ochir transcribed ‘Mongolyn Tovch Tüükh’ from Mongolian script into Cyrillic, published in 1934 by A. Amar [83], a 20th-century Mongolian politician and scientist, and published it in 1989 making it known to the public.

In the foreword written for the 2nd edition of the work, A. Ochir explained 138 words facilitating comprehension for the reader. Following a second publication in 1989, the need for a third one was met with the consent of Prof. A. Ochir.

A. Amar included the translations of Bilge Khaan, Köl Tigin, and Tonyukuk inscriptions, known as Orkhon Inscriptions from the Turkic Khanate. The identity of the translator is unknown; however, the translations have been replaced by newer ones lately.

A. Amar has, other than his presentations, about 10 published scientific articles and books, among which the best known is ‘Mongolyn Tovch Tüükh’. In 1933, for the celebrations of the Independence Day of the People’s Republic of Mongolia, and the 13th anniversary of the revolution, the compilation of Mongolian history yet again and its publication in five books was authorized by decree. So, it was proposed that the first two books covering the 13th century, and the 14th to 20th centuries be compiled by A. Amar, a book covering Bogd Khaan’s period as a religious and political leader by L. Dendev, two books recounting the revolutionary era by Kh. Choibalsan, D. Losol, and G. Demid. Of those, the book covering the 14th to 20th centuries could not be completed. The others were released for publication in 1934 [84, pp. 12–13, 16].

A. Amar’s purpose, as he mentioned in the foreword to his work, was not to prepare a scientific book, but a popular one for the public eager to learn its history. It is worthwhile to note that this is the first attempt regarding the study and systematization of a millennium of Mongolian history succeeding 13th-century. Still, A. Amar, not only studied domestic and foreign sources in his field, and classified the obtained information, but also pointed out the problems in the early history of Mongols. For instance, he criticized the information in former Nanhiad sources about Mongolians originating from the Chinese and suggested that Mongols have the same roots as the Köktürks and are an independent nation. Nanhiad sutras name the ancestors of Mongols as ‘Hu’. The ‘Hu’ are Huns, the ancestors of Mongols. A. Amar’s opinions are widely accepted through later research.

The author criticizes the consecration of Börte Chinoa and Goo Maral by some scholars. He emphasized that even though historical figures, they were not ancestors of the Mongol nation, but only forefathers of Mongol Khans.

In his work, topics such as the Mongolian state structure, foreign relations, administrative structure of the Great Mongol State, military structure, battle tactics, and traditions are dealt with in detail.

A. Amar, based on his former studies, divides the spread of Buddhism in Mongolia into 3 periods. Moreover, he argues that the Mongolian state administration did not deal with religion in conquered areas, thus gaining the sympathy of the respective population. This argument has been supported by other scholars and secured its place in Mongolian historiography.

Realizing that ancestral legends and tales are relevant to historical events, A. Amar studied the geographic distribution and lifestyles of Mongolians. According to Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlullāh’s work ‘Jāmi’ al-Tawārīkh’, written at the beginning of the 14th

century in the Palace of Mongol Khans residing in Iran, the ancestors of Mongols once settled in Ergenekon, lived there for a long time, finally faced the problem of overpopulation and found themselves a way through the mountain, and moved to new lands.

The author, writing his book ‘Mongolyn Tovch Tüükh,’ utilized well the earlier sutras and sources together with inscriptions found in Mongolia. He used the B. Renchin translation of Orkhon Inscriptions from Russian into Mongolian. This translation is still in use. A. Amar’s work differs from classical historiography which narrates the lives of religious and political rulers usually within the framework of Buddhism and its spread in Mongolia. It constitutes a new development in the writing of history. He highlighted the rise of Mongols, offering Mongols suppressed under the Manchu regime to regain their national pride, and so he actively participated in the reconstructive actions after the revolution. The author’s emphasis on Chinggis Khaan’s contribution to history was in harmony with this.

A. Amar’s work, which was completed 90 years ago, is still valuable in the field of scientific research and practice as a bridge between the transitions from classical to modern historiography and shows the progress made in the field of Mongolian historiography.

Conclusion

Although the introduction of the script as late as the 13th century negatively impacted the development of Mongolian historiography, numerous historical works were penned in Mongolian. As a result, Mongolian history was conserved and transferred by those who created it in their native language.

An important problem we frequently face in Mongolian historiography is the insertion of oral tradition into the written history of creation, especially in connection with Chinggis Khaan’s ancestors. In the ‘SHM’, we observe the reflection of Tengri belief in abundance.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, Mongolian socio-cultural life underwent significant changes due to the spread of Tibetan Lamaism. This led to a shift in historiography, influenced by Lamaistic philosophy. During this time, traditional tales of the steppes and nomadic lifestyle were replaced by Buddhist legends and historical fables. Therefore, the ‘SHM’ should be seen as a reflection of a common Turco-Mongolian tradition and a product of the historiography of the steppes.

It is a fact that studies of Mongolian history and culture do not utilize Mongolian sources adequately. The most important problem we face in this aspect is the lack of knowledge of which historical material is linked to which historical event in Mongolian history, and the command of the Mongolian language. After all, related sources are written in this language. It is also of paramount importance that a bibliographical classification concerning Mongolian history be created. Furthermore, representatives of the nomadic civilization of the Mongols, even today, cannot be fully understood through a European-centered orientalist methodology. Especially studying Mongol medieval history, and composing a comparative analysis of sources, it should be kept in mind that in historical works dealing with belief systems and cultural data, legends also play a great role in clarification of historical events.

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КЛАССИЧЕСКАЯ ЭПОХА МОНГОЛЬСКОЙ ИСТОРИЧЕСКОЙ ПИСЬМЕННОСТИ И ОБЗОР МОНГОЛЬСКИХ ИСТОЧНИКОВ

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Резюме. После объединения под властью Чингиз-хана в 1206 году началась эпоха, в течение которой монголы сыграли важную роль в мировой истории. Несмотря на существование негативного восприятия Великой Монгольской империи в источниках, её влияние на политическую, экономическую и культурную жизнь Евразии продолжалось веками. Хотя монголы создали свою письменность лишь в 1204 году, их устная традиция за короткое время была зафиксирована в письменной форме, чтобы историческое наследие могло быть передано следующим поколениям. Традиция монгольской историографии, начавшаяся с создания стелы, известной как Стела Чингиз-хана, развивалась иначе по сравнению с другими современными азиатскими нациями и сохранила это отличие до сегодняшнего дня. Наряду с предоставлением ценной информации об истории монголов и других народов, с которыми они взаимодействовали, исторические источники, написанные на монгольском языке, такие как «Тайная история монголов» и «Алтан Тобчи», также являются важными вехами в монгольской историографии. Особенно с появлением таких работ, как «Алтан Тобчи» и «Эрденийн Тобчи», написанных в период, когда буддизм стал широко распространен среди монголов, влияние буддийской историографии на монголов стало очевидным. В результате были добавлены теологические мотивы, придававшие легитимность действиям монгольских ханов, особенно Чингиз-хана.

Ключевые слова: монголы, монгольские источники, Внутренняя Азия, историография, ламаизм

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