

# THE DATE OF THE 'SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS' RECONSIDERED

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The *Secret History of the Mongols* (SHM) is without question the most important textual legacy left by the Mongols during the century and a half of their world empire. No fuller record exists of how the Mongols themselves viewed their great ruler Chinggis Qan, his successor Ögedei Qa'an, and the empire's champions, institutions, and divine mandate. Accurate dating of this key text is thus vital to study of the Mongol empire's history. In an effort to develop a clearer understanding of the historical context of the SHM, I propose to review the debates on its dating and compilation and re-examine the evidence to provide a fresh assessment of when it was written.

As is well known, the SHM concludes with a colophon which gives the date of its composition only in the animal cycle system: the year of the mouse. Given the work's vivid, seemingly contemporary character, the solution would appear to be simple: find the first year of the mouse that comes after the last event mentioned in the work, and this will be the likely date of the text. Since the text covers all but the conclusion of Ögedei Qa'an's reign (1229–1241), the *prima facie* conclusion is that it was written in the mouse year of 1240. Further research has shown, however, that hidden within the texts are a number of anachronisms; since some of these anachronisms date from 1257 to 1263, the next most obvious date would be 1264, placing the composition of the SHM

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I would like to thank the two anonymous readers for *JSYS* and Charles Melville for their comments and suggestions on this paper, and Bettine Birge for her encouragement in bringing this paper to publication. I have preferred to render the Mongolian names found in Chinese transcription directly into Mongolian wherever at all possible. I have added Chinese characters, however, to the reconstructed forms of any name that is not actually attested in a non-Chinese source. I have also given the characters for any term or word of Chinese origin even if it has become known under a medieval pronunciation (e.g., *gui ong* for *guowang* 國王).

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squarely within the reign of Qubilai Qa'an and his Chinese-influenced historiographical enterprises.

What complicates the task, though, is the possibility that the colophon applies only to a first draft of the text and that much material was added after that date. The colophon may date the work to a “year of the mouse,” but if material was added later than this “year of the mouse” might actually be before the latest events described in the text as we have it. With this possibility in mind, many scholars—probably most of the active researchers on the text—currently date the original text of the SHM to 1228, and see the material on subsequent years as being added in later. Ding Qian 丁謙 advanced this point in 1901, but it was Uemura Seiji 植村清二 who first placed it on a scientific footing.<sup>1</sup> The colophon states that the history was composed during a “year of the mouse” at a “great assembly” (*yeke qurilta*) in the Mongol heartland, and proponents of 1228 have argued that only for this “year of the mouse” can such an “great assembly” be documented. Since then, Igor de Rachewiltz has held this view in decades of research, as have Gerhard Doerfer and Paul Ratchnevsky.<sup>2</sup> Although he never published on the topic, Francis Woodman Cleaves was very much of this opinion, as I heard several times in classes with him. Among the advocates of 1228, however, there is disagreement on what exactly the original 1228 text contained. Ishihama Juntarō 石濱純太朗, along with Uemura Seiji and most later Japanese scholars, have held that the original SHM was restricted to the first ten chapters, which end with Chinggis Qan's unification of the Mongolian plateau and the death of his last internal rival, Teb-Tenggeri, around 1210.<sup>3</sup> Thus all the material on Chinggis's conquests in North China and Central Asia, as well as the account of his son Ögedei's reign were added later. By contrast, the European, American, and Australian advocates of this position have contended that all the material up to the death of Chinggis Qan was written in 1228, and that later editors not only added a further account about Ögedei Qa'an, but also edited, rearranged, and interpolated much of the SHM's extant material on Chinggis.

The 1228 date does not simply increase the perceived textual complexity of the work, it also makes it far less useful as a historical document. If we conclude that the text has undergone extensive revisions by later editors, many of which

1. Ding Qian, “Yuan mishi zuozhe renming kao;” Uemura Seiji, “Genchō hishi shōki.”

2. Gerhard Doerfer, “Zur Datierung der geheimen Geschichte der Mongolen;” P. Ratchnevsky, “Šigi Qutuqu,” 91–92.

3. See Ishihama Juntarō, “Genchō hishi kō,” 1–9.

altered the political orientation of the text, then the work's viewpoint loses focus. Any given line may have been decisively shaped sometime between 1228 and the 1260s, and thus can only rarely be matched to a precise authorial intent and context. Many commentators indeed treat the *SHM* as a work as in some sense not intended to be fully historical. The radical proposal of Okada Hidehiro 岡田英弘 that the work is a "historical novel," composed in 1324, has met with little favor.<sup>4</sup> More widely accepted is the analysis of the work as an "epic chronicle" (the general descriptive term adopted by Louis Ligeti, Igor de Rachewiltz, and others). It is impossible to deny the powerful influence of both poetry and folklore in the *SHM*, as set out with references to the scholarly literature by Igor de Rachewiltz in the introduction to his translation and commentary.<sup>5</sup> Yet he is also certainly correct to emphasize that the work "was meant to serve as a guide and instruction, not just as a plain record or for entertainment. Even in the most poetic passages . . . there is an undeniable consciousness of history."<sup>6</sup> De Rachewiltz goes so far as to cite in this connection A. Fichter's assessment of Vergil's *Aeneid*: "The dynastic prophet is an analyst of historical experience. He bestows on himself . . . the privilege of shaping his material so that 'beginning, middle, and end all strike the same note.'"<sup>7</sup>

This is indeed exactly my own viewpoint. I contend, moreover, that it is precisely this single-minded pursuit of unified analysis of historical experience that offers the key to understanding the work. In contrast to the point of view implicit in the 1228 dating, I argue that the *SHM* as we have it today is in fact a unitary text with only insignificant editing. This unity, I will show, implies a date of 1252, after a decade of drift was brought to an end by the coronation of Möngke Qa'an in 1251 and the return of a sense of purpose, but before the coronation of Qubilai Qa'an in 1260 and the inauguration of a new way of viewing and writing the dynastic history. This dating was first proposed by Rene Grousset:

Yet in §255 we see Genghis-khan "predict" that, if the descendants of Ögödei prove incapable of ruling, the empire should fall to the descendants of another of his sons. As this is in effect what happened in 1250–1251, with the accession of

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4. Okada, "The Secret History of the Mongols, a Pseudo-Historical Novel," and "The Chinggis Khan Shrine and the *Secret History of the Mongols*."

5. de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, lxvii–lxx.

6. de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, lxix.

7. de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, lxx.

the great khan Möngke, and as on the other hand, §281 with the self-scrutiny it has Ögödei make, seems very much like a posthumous judgment on the reign of this prince, who died on 11 December, 1241, there is perhaps occasion to ask ourselves—this is a hypothesis which I will allow myself to risk here—whether the “year of the rat” when the *Secret History* was completed is not, instead of being 1240, is instead the “next” year of the rat, that is 1252.<sup>8</sup>

This position was defended with further arguments by Louis Ligeti<sup>9</sup> and Yu Dajun 余大鈞.<sup>10</sup> Fully establishing this position, however, will involve a much deeper analysis of the internal evidence of the text. This analysis, I believe, will demonstrate that the SHM, far from being the result of a kind of imaginative reconstruction or embellishment of the history of the Mongols, remote from the hurly-burly of political life, was, just like Vergil’s *Aeneid*, a partisan narrative penned by a writer deeply engaged with the political and religious currents released by the coronation of his imperial patron.

### *The Textual History and Divisions of the Secret History*

The *Secret History of the Mongols* has been preserved in two different traditions. The first, and better known, is the version which was transcribed into Chinese characters, given an interlinear translation, and coupled with a running translation. The whole complex was then printed as the *Yuan mishi* 元秘史 (*Secret History of the Yuan*), or later the *Yuanchao mishi* 元朝秘史 (*Secret History of the Yuan Dynasty* [YCMS]). This transcription and interlinear translation was made early in the Ming dynasty and its subsequent history is well known.<sup>11</sup> One issue about which scholarly opinion is divided is on the significance of the divisions in the earliest text. The original printed text was divided into 10 *juan* 卷 (chapters) of text and 2 *juan* of “supplement” (*xuji* 續集). Was this division into basic text and supplement created by the printers (as Igor de Rachewiltz and most Western scholars believe)? Or does it record some original division in the Mongolian text (as Naka Michiyo 那珂通世 and most Japanese scholars believe)?

8. René Grousset, “État actuel des études sur l’histoire genghiskhanide,” 22.

9. See the introduction to his translation, L. Ligeti, trans., *A mongolok titkos története*.

10. Yu Dajun, “*Menggu mishi* chengshu niandai kao.”

11. See Hung, “The Transmission of the Book Known as *The Secret History of the Mongols*,” 433–465; Cleaves, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, xvii–lxv; de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, xlv–liii.

The other major tradition of preservation was in Mongolia. About 2/3 of the SHM's text on Chinggis Qan can be found incorporated into the text of the seventeenth-century chronicle *Altan tobchi* (Golden Summary), compiled by Lubsang-Danzin (Tibetan: Bluva-bzang bsTan-'dzin) shortly after 1651. Much smaller portions are also found cited in an abridged or anonymous version of the *Altan tobchi*, and the *Erdeni-yin tobchi* (Precious Chronicle). Finally numerous snippets excerpted from almost the whole range of the SHM's text on Chinggis Qan, including portions not found in the text of Lubsang-Danzin's *Altan tobchi*, are found in the *Asaragchi neretü-yin teüke* (The History of Asaragchi) composed by Byamba (or Shamba) in 1667. After about 1700, however, those portions of the text not incorporated into the anonymous *Altan tobchi* or the *Erdeni-yin tobchi* exercised no further influence on traditional Mongol historiography; Lubsang-Danzin's *Altan tobchi* and the *Asaragchi neretü-yin teüke* were each preserved to the twentieth century in a single manuscript. Although a thorough, critical comparison of the citations from the *Secret History* in all four seventeenth century chronicles has yet to be done, it seems likely that all stem from the discovery of a single manuscript of the SHM. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a new cycle of legends about Chinggis Khan had arisen, something only conceivable in an environment in which the SHM text was rare or inaccessible. We may speculate that a manuscript of the SHM was rediscovered in the seventeenth century and incorporated into the *Altan tobchi* and the *Asaragchi neretü-yin teüke*, but the SHM was never able to dislodge the previously established legend cycle.<sup>12</sup>

Linked to the question of the dating of the SHM is the unity of the text. As mentioned, those in favor of the 1228 date must perforce accept that the section on Ögedei Qa'an's coronation and reign (at the very least) must have been added subsequently. It has been a common contention among Japanese scholars, since Naka Michiyo's *Chingisu kan jitsuroku* 成吉思汗實錄, echoed by Ishihama Juntarō, Uemura Seiji, and Okada Hidehiro, that the original SHM text is only the first ten chapters, those concerning the reign of Chinggis Qan up to his unification of Mongolia and killing of his shamanic rival, Teb Tenggeri, around 1210.<sup>13</sup> For them, not only the section on Ögedei Qa'an, but also the sections on Chinggis Qan's campaigns against the Jin 金 dynasty, the

12. Atwood, "How the Mongols Rejected the Secret History."

13. Naka, *Chingisu kan jitsuroku*, 3–4; Ishihama, "Genchō hishi kō," 5–6; Uemura, "Genchō hishi shōki," 112; Okada, "The Secret History of the Mongols, a Pseudo-Historical Novel," 61; Okada, "The Chinggis Khan Shrine and the *Secret History of the Mongols*," 291.

Xia 夏 dynasty, and the Khorazm Shah were added after the basic work was composed.

While I will ultimately argue that the SHM is a unitary text, it will clarify my exposition and analysis of the other arguments if the text is divided into three parts:

*Part I:* Chapters I–X (§§1–246) in the YCMS text; 4a–98b (with interpolations) in the *Altan tobchi* text. Covers the rise of Chinggis Qan up to c. 1210.

*Part II:* Chapter XI–XII (part) (§§247–268) in the YCMS; 110b–126b (with interpolations) in the *Altan tobchi*. Covers the foreign conquests and death of Chinggis Qan from 1211 to 1227.

*Part III:* Chapter XII (part) (§§269–282) in the YCMS, missing in the *Altan tobchi*. Covers the reign of Ögedei from 1228 to c.1240.

Despite the ostensible periodization, each part contains a number of anachronisms indicating that it was actually composed a decade or more after the events described. Since a number of scholars have posited the lack of unity in the text, it is important to examine these anachronisms separately, part by part. It is also important to distinguish between anachronisms that are deeply embedded in the narrative and those that involve merely a term or spelling. While the latter may be dismissed as simply copyists' errors, the former could enter into the text only with significant rewriting or re-editing. Thus anachronisms of the former type determine the earliest possible date at which that part received its final narrative form as we have it today, while anachronisms of the later sort may relate only to a copyist's alteration, long after the text received its overall present shape.

The necessity of distinguishing deeply embedded narrative themes from single narrative points or spellings is important to emphasize since, as I acknowledge, there is no *perfect* solution to the date of the SHM. No year of the mouse will make sense of every single line of the text; and consequently, it will be necessary not just to list the anachronisms but to weigh their differing degrees of importance. No date exists that entirely obviates the existence of post-composition emendation of the text, but there is a particular period and situation (namely the early reign of Möngke in 1252) that I believe makes the best sense not only of the greatest number of passages, but also of the work as a whole.

### Part I: Anachronisms and their Dates

Part I of the SHM seems to contain relatively fewer anachronisms than parts II and III. Or, to put it differently, later sources and historians corroborate the sequence and historical logic of Part I's narrative more fully than they do that of Parts II and III. This may be because Part I is in fact more accurate, or it might be because later historians lacked equally detailed sources about Chinggis Qan's early rise with which to challenge the correctness of the SHM. In fact, the SHM is the source, directly or indirectly, of almost all that we know about Chinggis Qan before about 1210. Anachronisms can still be found in Part I, however:

- 1) The description of the second revolt of the Merkids and Sübe'etei's pursuit, dated to 1205 in SHM §198–99, is dated to 1217 in the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* 聖武親征錄 and Rashid al-Dīn's biography of Chinggis Qan.<sup>14</sup> While this anachronism does not directly affect the dating controversy, it does pose a difficulty in assuming that a record written in 1228 could be so inaccurate about fairly recent events.
- 2) The granting of the title *gui ong* 國王 (Prince of State), dated to 1206 in SHM §206, is dated to 1218 in the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* and its Persian paraphrase,<sup>15</sup> and to 1217 in the biographical materials on Muqali and the *Yuan shi* 元史.<sup>16</sup> Moreover the granting of the title *gui ong* in the SHM is treated purely as an honorific title and not linked to Muqali's position in North China, while in reality, this title was originally attached to his position as viceroy of conquered China.<sup>17</sup> When Muqali and Bo'orchu are granted appanages in North China in the SHM, it is only just before Chinggis's death and on no greater scale than any other of his trusty companions (§266). This treatment would make sense only after 1229, when Muqali's family's wide-ranging civil and military powers were broken up and only the title *gui ong* left to his descendants.<sup>18</sup> It

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14. *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, 89a–89b; Rashiduddin/Thackston, *Jami'u't-Tawarikh*, vol. I, 226–27. The *Shengwu qinzheng lu* is usually dated from the latter half of the reign of Qubilai Qa'an; see Pelliot and Hambis, *Histoire des Campagnes de Gengis Khan*, pp. xi–xiii, and Hung, "Transmission of the Book," pp. 478–79. The dating of these events is corroborated, however, by all non-*Secret History* sources.

15. *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, 90a–91a; Rashiduddin/Thackston, *Jami'u't-Tawarikh*, vol. I, 227–28.

16. Su Tianjue, *Yuanchao mingchen shilue*, I/1, 3b; Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 1/19, cf. 119/2932.

17. See Zhao Gong, "Meng-Da beilu jianzheng" 5b–6a, 11b.

18. Matsuda, "On the Ho-nan Mongol Army," 35–36.

would make even more sense during Möngke Qa'an's reign, when the prestige of Muqali's family had reached its nadir (see below).

- 3) The granting to Shigi Qutuqu of the position of chief judge (*jarghuchi*) and census-taker over the sedentary lands is dated to 1206 in SHM §203, but to 1234–35 in the *Shengwu qinzheng lu*<sup>19</sup> and all other sources.<sup>20</sup> The SHM's treatment of Shigi Qutuqu has long been recognized as unreliable. That he was an orphaned baby in a cradle in 1195–96,<sup>21</sup> and yet became Chinggis Qan's most trusted adviser in 1206 is of course not credible. The SHM author tried to boost Shigi Qutuqu's seniority by making him the foster-son of Chinggis Qan's mother, Ö'elün (SHM §135, 138), but Rashid al-Din's account, which makes him the foster son of Chinggis's wife Börte is generally recognized as more plausible.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, SHM §154 and *Yuan shi*<sup>23</sup> record the tradition that Belgütei, not Shigi Qutuqu, was the judge under Chinggis Qan. Thus one can say that all the material on Shigi Qutuqu in SHM has a consistent slant, one only possible after his appointment as civilian administrator for North China in 1234–35. After Ögedei's death, in the 1240s, Shigi Qutuqu appears to have been out of office in Güyüg's reign, as the Chinese Confucian scholar Zhang Dehui 張德輝 recommended to Qubilai in 1248 that Shigi Qutuqu, as a distinguished senior official, be returned to office.<sup>24</sup> He returned to honor only under Möngke, however, receiving in 1253 an appanage of 4,000 households.<sup>25</sup> Thus while the passages on Shigi Qutuqu *must* date to no earlier than 1234–35, they are most plausibly dated to Möngke's reign, when both Chinggis's and Ögedei's reigns were in the somewhat misty past.
- 4) As Okada Hidehiro pointed out, the SHM's famous description of the Qonggirad (also attested as Unggirad) as a people who do not make war, but rather “from days of old live by the comeliness of their daughters' daughters, and by the beauty of their daughters” and whose sons are valued for the wealth of their encampments (§§64–65, 176; *Altan tobchi* 14a–b) does not seem to fit their warlike history before Chinggis's rise.<sup>26</sup> However, his contention that,

19. *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, 105b–106a.

20. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 2/34; Peng Daya and Xu Ting, “Hei-Da shilue jianzheng,” 13b; Yeli Chucui, *Zhanran jushi wenji*, 328–29.

21. Cf. de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 486, which dates the campaign on the basis of Tuotuo, *Jin shi*, 94/2088–89.

22. Rashiduddin/Thackston, *Jami' u't-tawarikh*, I, 47–48; Ratchnevsky, “Šigi Qutuqu,” 75–77.

23. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 117/2905.

24. Erdemtü, trans., *Jang Dé Hüi-yin* “*Dabagan aru-ber jigulcilagsan temdeglel*,” 102, 184.

25. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 95/2433, cf. 2442.

26. Okada, “The Chinggis Khan Shrine and the *Secret History of the Mongols*.”



since this situation was not true until Qubilai Qa'an's reign and after, the SHM must date to the fourteenth century, has won little support. Yet although Qubilai was the first great khan to rule with a Qonggirad empress, the position of the Qonggirads as the imperial-in-laws was made official before that. In 1227, Chinggis Qan's sons made their Qonggirad mother's brother, Alchidai Noyan, the imperial maternal uncle. In 1237, he was honored with a decree:

A daughter born of the Qonggirad in each generation shall be made empress, and a son in each generation shall be granted an imperial princess. Every year in the first moon of the four seasons, they shall hear it read what has been so granted by imperial decree; from generation to generation this shall not cease.<sup>27</sup>

The SHM passages about the Qonggirad, while not inconceivable before, thus make best sense as being written after 1237.

- 5) The marriages of Chinggis Qan's sons Tolui (§186) and Ögedei (§198) are both mentioned in Part I, but those of their elder brothers, Cha'adai and Jochi, are not. Tolui and Ögedei's wives, Sorqaqtani Beki and Töregene, are precisely those ladies who were particularly prominent in the 1240s. Ögedei's widow Töregene was regent (1241–1247), and John of Plano Carpini observed of Sorqaqtani Beki in 1247 that, "among the Tatars this lady is the most renowned, with the exception of the Emperor's mother [i.e. Töregene]."<sup>28</sup> Töregene and Sorqaqtani Beki were also the mothers of the third and fourth great khans respectively: Güyüg (1246–1248) and Möngke (1251–1259). While the mention of these alone of Chinggis Qan's daughters-in-law might be a coincidence, it would most comfortably indicate a date for these sections sometime after Ögedei's death in 1241.
- 6) The consistent use of the term Qa'an for Chinggis Qan throughout Part I is anachronistic as this title was not used by the Mongols until after Ögedei adopted it in 1229.<sup>29</sup> Proponents of the 1228 theory, however, see this as the result of later copy editing.<sup>30</sup>
- 7) In §198, Ögedei is referred to as Ögödei Qa'an, a usage which clearly dates to after his coronation in 1229. Again, however, this could be explained as later copy editing.

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27. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 118/2915.

28. Dawson, ed., *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, 26.

29. de Rachewiltz, "Qan, Qa'an and the Seal of Güyüg.", .

30. Ratchnevsky, "Šigi Qutuqu," 92; de Rachewiltz, *Secret History of the Mongols*, xlii–xliii.

As a result, the text of Part I of the SHM, as it stands today must date to sometime after 1234–37, and would fit most naturally into the reign of Mōngke, when Shigi Qutuqu was restored to honor as an elder statesman, but Muqali's family was at the nadir of its prestige. Even if one dismisses items 5–7 as the result merely of later copyists, the themes of the Qonggirad, Shigi Qutuqu, and Muqali are deeply embedded in the text, and also intimately linked to the theme of Mother Ö'elün's "four foundlings" of whom Shigi Qutuqu was one. Thus we must conclude that no mere superficial post-1228 copy-editing could produce the Part I text we have today, but rather that it was either written, or thoroughly re-edited, sometime after 1237, and probably under Mōngke's reign. Since the text we have of Part I was thus in any case produced after Ögedei's coronation and assumption of the title *qa'an* there is in fact no compelling reason to believe that the anachronisms noted in 6) and 7) were created by later editing.

### *Part II: Anachronisms and their Dates*

It is in Part II where anachronisms are encountered in the greatest density. Indeed, once they are set forth in order, it will become clear that the "revisions" to any conceivable 1228 text sufficient to produce the SHM text of Part II as we have it now would be tantamount to a complete and radical rewriting of the text:

- 1) SHM §260 (*Altan tobchi*, 116b) has Muqali at Chinggis Qan's camp in Central Asia around 1221. All other sources (including the 1221 travelogue of Zhao Gong<sup>31</sup>) have Muqali in North China as viceroy and *gui ong* from 1217 until his death in 1223. While not precisely an anachronism, the SHM's statement is quite unbelievable as the sort of mistake an author writing in 1228 could make.
- 2) SHM §260 (*Altan tobchi*, 117a–b) also has Chinggis Qan sending Chormaqaqan to attack the caliph of Baghdad in 1221, while all other sources put this in 1228 or 1229, under Chinggis's successor Ögedei.<sup>32</sup>
- 3) In SHM §251 (*Altan tobchi*, 112a–b), coming between events of 1211 and 1219, Chinggis Qan and his son Tolui battle the Jin generals Ile, Qada, and

31. Zhao Gong, "Meng-Da beilu jianzheng," 5b–6a, 13a–b.

32. *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, 98a; Juvaini/Boyle, *The History of the World Conqueror*, 190; Rashid al-Din/Boyle, *Successors of Genghis Khan*, 33.

Höbögetür at the Tongguan 潼關 Pass. As already recognized by Yu Dajun,<sup>33</sup> this confuses the battles conducted by Sammuqa Ba'atur around Tongguan Pass in 1216<sup>34</sup> with those of Ögedei Qa'an and Tolui around Tongguan Pass in 1232.<sup>35</sup> Only in the accounts of battles in year 1232 are Ile (Yila Pu'a 移刺蒲阿) and Qada (Heda 合達) found. This section thus could not have been written before 1232.<sup>36</sup>

- 4) SHM §263 (*Altan tobchi*, 117b–118a) states that Mahmud Yalavach and his son Mas'ud Beg were appointed as the two great administrators for all the cities in the empire around 1223, as Chinggis Qan was leaving Central Asia for Mongolia. Mas'ud Beg was to administer Central Asia and Yalavach to administer Zhongdu 中都 (modern Beijing 北京) and North China. All other sources state that Yalavach was appointed to administer Central Asia at the beginning of Ögedei's reign in 1229. Not until 1241 was he transferred to North China, leaving his son Mas'ud Beg to replace him in Central Asia.<sup>37</sup> This section thus could not possibly have been written until after 1241, and it would only be considerably after 1241 that this appointment could be confused with one made under Chinggis Qan. Yet shortly thereafter, the two administrators were both dismissed during Töregene's regency (1242–1246), not to be restored until Gütyüg Qa'an's enthronement in 1246.<sup>38</sup> 1246 is thus the *terminus a quo* for this passage.
- 5) SHM §255, on the succession to the Chinggis's throne, concludes by saying that if the descendants of Ögedei be born worthless, "will there not be born among my (i.e. Chinggis Qan's, not just Ögedei's) seed one who is good?" The passage describes just such a worthless child by the saying:

If you wrap it in green grass,  
It would not be eaten by an ox  
If you wrap it in fat  
It would not be eaten by a dog.

33. Yu Dajun, "Menggu mishi chengshu niandai kao," 152; cf. Yü Da-djün [Yu Dajun], "On the Dating of the *Secret History of the Mongols*," 292–93.

34. *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, 86b–88a; Rashiduddin/Thackston, *Jami'u't-tawarikh*, I, 224–226; Song Lian, *Yuan shi* 1/19.

35. See *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, 100b–103b; Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 115/2886–87.

36. It is also worth noting that the joint attack of Tolui and Imperial Son-in-Law Chigü (~Chügü) on Tongguan Pass is a misplaced version of their attack on Xuandezhou 宣德州 in 1213; see *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, 78b–79a; Rashiduddin/Thackston, *Jami'u't-tawarikh*, I, 220; Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 1/16.

37. See *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, 98b–99a, 107a–b; Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 2/30, 37.

38. Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, I, 241, 243, 257.

As was first noticed by Barthold,<sup>39</sup> this very same quatrain is cited in Rashīd al-Dīn with the conclusion that *even so*, the empire would remain in Ögedei's hands.<sup>40</sup> Since this makes much more sense in context, this would seem to be the original point of the quatrain: that even so, Ögedei's descendants would rule. This form would thus been a slogan of Ögedei's supporters from his death until their purge in 1251–52. The SHM version would thus be an appropriation and partisan rewording of this slogan first used in an opposite sense during the succession disputes from 1246 on. Only after Tolui's family triumphed in 1251, with the election of Tolui's son Möngke, would the application given in the SHM have become the dominant version. This passage should therefore date from after that time.<sup>41</sup>

- 6) There is the further general impression of extreme geographical and chronological confusion in these chapters. The geographical misconceptions might be accounted for by assuming that the author was not a personal participant in these campaigns. The chronological ones seem harder to square with the idea of an author writing at a great assembly with most of the principals present only ten or so years after the events.
- 7) Two cities are mentioned in SHM §247 (*Altan tobchi* 110a) in forms not in use until much later. As William Hung first pointed out, the city of Xuandezhou was not renamed Xuandefu 宣德府 (written Söndiiwu in the YCMS version;

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39. Cf. Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 478–79.

40. Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors of Genghis Khan*, 182.

41. Paul Ratchnevsky paradoxically used this passage's indication that originally the throne was to remain permanently in Ögedei's family as an argument for the 1228 date. While apparently accepting 1252 as a possible *quriltā* date (unlike 1240 or 1264), he argued that “[Möngke's] elevation contravened Činggis Qan's will. This being so, Möngke would hardly have benefited from the commemoration and eulogy of the world conqueror and of the heroic figures of that bygone period at a time so close to his own irregular election” (Ratchnevsky, “Šigi Qutuqu,” 91–92). In other words, the SHM could not have been written under Möngke, whose aim would have been to downplay the memory of Chinggis Qan. Excluding 1252, 1228 was thus left for him as the only possible date. Yet the idea that Möngke could not possibly have been willing to commemorate Chinggis Qan seems wholly implausible; for all of the Mongol khans Chinggis was the founder of their legitimacy. Obviously Möngke would not have ignored Chinggis Qan, but rather attempted to make the argument that his accession was indeed in accordance with the great khan's will. The best proof of that fact is that the SHM as we have it today actually contains numerous incidents telling those with ears to hear that Tolui and his sons would be better emperors than Ögedei's line. Clearly a powerful argument for Möngke as the right successor *could* be made (since it was), and if it *could* be made, there is no reason to argue Möngke would not have *wanted* to make it, rather than just ignoring the past. In any case, the 1228 date has numerous difficulties explored below.

corrupt form Sonchidu in *Altan tobchi*, 110a) until 1263, and Bozhou 博州 was not renamed Dongchang 東昌 (written Dūngchang in the YCMS; corrupt form Dūngchu in *Altan tobchi*, 110b) until 1276.<sup>42</sup> This would indicate a date after 1276 for the SHM. Even William Hung himself, however, saw Dongchang as a copyist's error for Dongging 東京. We also know that in the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* what was originally Xuandezhou/Sön-di-jiu was corrected by the copyist or translator to Xuandefu.<sup>43</sup> Such an up-dating by copyists thus cannot be ruled out here also.

Part II was thus certainly not composed during Ögedei's life. The accession of Möngke in 1251 is the earliest possible date for a composition of anything like the present text.

### *Part III: Anachronisms and their Dates*

A number of events in the account of Ögedei's reign in Part III appear to reflect more or less certainly events that happened after his death:

- 1) In SHM §276, the prince Güyüg is said to have been recalled in disgrace by his father Ögedei Qa'an to the court from the campaign in eastern Europe. As Yu Dajun pointed out,<sup>44</sup> however, Güyüg was only ordered to return to Mongolia in the last moon of 1240 (Dec 15–January 13, 1240/41) and had only reached the Emil River in today's northern Xinjiang 新疆 when he received the news that his father Ögedei had died.<sup>45</sup> This section must thus have been written long enough after Ögedei's death in 1241 that it was forgotten that Güyüg had no chance to meet his father before he died.
- 2) The SHM records that during Ögedei's reign, the Chinggisid prince Büri, along with Güyüg and others, reviled Batu, for which Büri was remanded to his father Cha'adai for punishment, while Güyüg and the non-Chinggisid Harghasun were to be disciplined by Batu (§§275–77). Again, as observed by Yu Dajun,<sup>46</sup> Rashîd al-Dîn records that Büri's infraction occurred during Möngke Qa'an's reign (1251–1252), and was punished by dispatching Büri to

42. Hung, "Transmission of the Book," 488–90

43. Compare *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, 78b, to Rashiduddin/Thackston, *Jami' u't-tawarikh*, I, 217.

44. Yu Dajun, "Menggu mishi chengshu niandai kao," 155–56; Yü Da-djün, "On the Dating of the *Secret History of the Mongols*," 299.

45. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 2/37; Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, I, 239–240, 248; Rashîd al-Dîn, *Successors of Genghis Khan*, 61, 176.

46. Yu Dajun, "Menggu mishi chengshu niandai kao," 156; Yü Da-djün, "On the Dating of the SHM," 300.

Batu's court where he was executed.<sup>47</sup> This seems to be corroborated by William of Rubruck,<sup>48</sup> although without the explicit chronological placement of Büri's infraction in Möngke Qa'an's reign. Similarly the reference to Harghasun being remanded to Batu's authority appears to be fulfilled in the execution of Harghasun along with his father Eljigidei early in the reign of Möngke Qa'an. The mode of execution — stuffing his mouth with stones — was elsewhere used for commoners cursing a Chinggisid.<sup>49</sup> While it is quite possible that the SHM is correct and the insults directed to Batu occurred during Ögedei's reign, only to be punished under Möngke's reign, a public reference to these curses as a crime that must be punished is only plausible after the criminals were in fact executed, that is after 1251.

- 3) As first Naka Michiyo,<sup>50</sup> and later Arthur Waley and Gari Ledyard pointed out, the reference to Yesüder Qorchi replacing Jalayirtai Qorchi as the commander of forces in Korea refers without any doubt to an event that took place in 1258.<sup>51</sup> This passage thus clearly dates from after that date.
- 4) Not only does the assessment of the four good deeds and four faults of Ögedei's reign in §281 seem like a posthumous one, as Rene Grousset pointed out,<sup>52</sup> but one can also say that the extremely negative assessment of Güyüg in §276–77 could not possibly have been written while he was khan, or even the eldest son of the reigning khan Ögedei, but only after his death and most likely after his sons had been punished as traitors, that is, after the great purge under Möngke of 1251–52.
- 5) The overall confusion of the SHM's chronology of Ögedei's reign again indicates a date considerably after his death.<sup>53</sup>

Apart from the notice about Jalayirtai and Yesüder in Korea, the other anachronistic points are all built into the narrative fairly deeply and cannot possibly be seen as simply interpolations. The absolute earliest possible date for Part III is 1251.

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47. Rashîd al-Dîn, *Successors of Genghis Khan*, 138, 203, 213

48. Jackson, *Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, chapter 23, 144–45.

49. Rashîd al-Dîn, *Successors of Genghis Khan*, 212–13; cf. Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, 590.

50. Naka, *Chingisu kan jitsuroku*, 628–34.

51. Ledyard, "The Mongol Campaigns in Korea and the Dating of *The Secret History of the Mongols*;" cf. Henthorn, *Korea: The Mongol Invasions*, 137, 150–51.

52. Grousset, "État actuel des études sur l'histoire genghiskhanide," 22.

53. See Yu Dajun, "Menggu mishi chengshu niandai kao," 148–49; Yü Da-djün, "On the Dating of the *Secret History of the Mongols*," 284–86.

*The Latest Possible Date for the Composition of the SHM*

The SHM presents fewer specific indicators of its *terminus ad quem*. Still one can find a significant number of deeply embedded indicators for the latest possible date and context before which it must have been written. Together they point unambiguously to the fact that the SHM could not possibly have been composed or extensively edited at the court of Qubilai Qa'an, but must have been composed during the reign of Möngke Qa'an, or else that of Qubilai's brother and rival Ariq-Böke (a very unlikely possibility):

- 1) The first of these indicators is the comparison with the Mongolian original of the Chinese *Shengwu qinzheng lu* text and the Persian paraphrase in Rashîd al-Dîn's biography of Chinggis Qan. As argued by both Paul Pelliot and Louis Hambis (1951: xii–xiii) and William Hung (1951: 472–81), this Mongolian original was composed during the reign of Qubilai Qa'an, during the years from the 1260s to the 1290s, before being translated into Chinese.<sup>54</sup> As even a superficial glance at the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* shows, it is heavily dependent on the SHM, yet is much drier and less vivid. Moreover the sections on the conquest of North China and the reign of Ögedei are far better informed, with a chronology corroborated by the other sources. The account of the conquest of Turkestan and Iran has been less radically altered, although improvements are clearly visible even there.

Both the SHM and the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* were produced in court environments: one more Mongol nativist and the other more Sino-Mongolian. As a reflection of the different styles of history in the different courts, the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* was edited with a less personal view of history, a better apparatus for chronological accuracy, and with far more knowledge about the conquests outside of Mongolia, and in North China in particular. Since we know that Qubilai Qa'an sponsored the large scale compilation of records of the previous dynasties by Chinese scholars, the obvious conclusion is that this striking difference between the two sources is a result of the fact that SHM was composed *before* the beginning of Qubilai's historical projects, and the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* *after* that beginning. These projects began in 1260–1264,<sup>55</sup> and the evidence indicates that at least some of the Mongolian material on the conquest of North China later incorporated into the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* was

54. Pelliot and Hambis, *Histoire des campagnes de Genghis Khan: Cheng-wou ts'in-tcheng lou*, xii–xiii; William Hung, "Transmission of the Book," 472–81.

55. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 4/67, 5/86, 92; cf. Fuchs, "Analecta zur mongolischen Uebersetzungsliteratur der Yuan-Zeit," 40; Chan, *Fall of the Jurchen Chin: Wang E's Memoir on Ts'ai-chou under the Mongol Siege (1233–1234)*, 17–18.

in existence probably before 1263 and certainly before 1266.<sup>56</sup> The compilation of the SHM must thus have taken place before this time, if it was associated with Qubilai's court at all.

- 2) The designation in SHM §263 of Mahmud Yalavach and his son Mas'ud Beg as Chinggis's own appointees as administrators of North China and Central Asia respectively must date after 1241 as stated above. It cannot, however, be plausibly dated after 1259. Yalavach along with Bujir and others were reappointed by Möngke Qa'an as chief administrators in the provincial government in Yanjing 燕京 and vicinity. From around 1252 to 1254, however, Qubilai and his associates such as Zhao Bi 趙璧 accused them of various forms of official malfeasance and Yalavach at least was dismissed and died soon after.<sup>57</sup> In 1257, however, Qubilai's own administrators were audited by Möngke's officials. One might imagine that the anti-Qubilai party ascendant at Möngke's court would then posthumously rehabilitate Mahmud Yalavach as a model administrator. After 1260, however, the tables turned again. Any historian at Qubilai's court would not only have known that Yalavach historically was *not* Chinggis Qan's choice to rule North China, but also would have repudiated any such Chinggisid precedent for Yalavach's style of rule.

In addition we find throughout the SHM a practice of mentioning as foreign officials only Turkestani Muslims and not the equally numerous Uyghurs and Kitans. In Part I, the only non-Mongol official mentioned as adhering to Chinggis Qan is Hasan (§182). Two Hasans are mentioned elsewhere as early adherents of Chinggis,<sup>58</sup> but historically they were by no means more prominent than, for example, Yelü Tuhua 耶律禿花 and Ahai 阿海 among Kitans or Chincai 鎮海 among Uyghurs, who are not mentioned in the SHM. To mention Hasan only but not the others would fit the reign of Möngke whose preference for Muslim administrators is well-documented,<sup>59</sup> but not that of Qubilai, who had quite different predilections.

- 3) As noted previously, the SHM almost completely ignores Muqali's pivotal role as viceroy in North China under Chinggis Qan. His rank as *gui ong* (Prince

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56. The text corresponding to the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* in Rashîd al-Dîn's Persian translation has Xuandezhou and Dexingfu 德興府 (*sûn-tî-jîûi* and *tâsîn-fû*; see Rashid-ad-Din/Smirnova, 168; Rashiduddin/Thackston, *Jami' u't-tawarikh*, 217). The former was changed to Xuandefu in 1263 and the latter to Fengshengzhou 奉聖州 in 1266 (see Hung, "Transmission of the Book," 478–479, 489–490). The Mongolian original for the Persian and Chinese traditions of the text would presumably date from before the change.

57. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 158/3747, 1/58; cf. Allsen, 101–02, 105–07.

58. Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, 87; Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 122/3016.

59. See the lists in Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 3/44–45, and Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, 48–52, 597, 600–01.



of State) is treated as a mere honorific title. In 1229, under Muqali's son Bo'ol 孛魯, the title was separated from the civil administrative functions and direct supervision over Muqali's old troops, although Bo'ol's older son Tas 塔思 served as an important field general under Ögedei, and his younger son Sughunchaq 速渾察 was praised by Ögedei as "Truly a son of Muqali's family."<sup>60</sup>

The prestige of both the *gui ong* title and the power of Muqali's former army in North China reached its nadir, however, under Möngke's reign. When Muqali's grandson Sughunchaq died, Möngke was unsatisfied with his successor:

When Sughunchaq passed away, the Intelligent Ancestor 憲宗 [i.e. Möngke Qa'an] chose among his sons and ordered that Nayan 乃燕 inherit his title [as *gui ong*]. Nayan declined this vigorously, saying "I have an older brother Qurumchi 忽林池 who ought to inherit it." The emperor said, "We know that, but the soft and weak cannot win victories." Qurumchi also stubbornly resisted. Nayan beat his head to the floor and while weeping continued to decline vigorously, refusing to accept the command. In the end, he said, "While the princely title I must not dare to accept, still I am willing to replace my elder brother in filling military and political duties." Qurumchi thereupon inherited the title as Prince of State, but in all affairs whether great or small he always consulted with Nayan, who was thoroughly competent for decisive analysis and never at a loss.<sup>61</sup>

If Möngke was looking for military victories, however, he was unlikely to find them in Nayan's hands either. Nayan himself is described as having a classic civil, as opposed to martial, personality: "modest and good-natured, studious, and well worth mentioning for wisdom."<sup>62</sup> Moreover, Nayan and Qurumchi's rigid adherence to primogeniture was already a sign of Confucian influence. Like all the other known members of Muqali's family, except Tatar dai 塔塔兒台, a descendant of Muqali's brother Daisun 帶孫,<sup>63</sup> Nayan joined the Confucianizing entourage of Möngke's brother Qubilai, who gave him the title *Sechen* or "wise."<sup>64</sup> Qubilai was, as we have seen, already in conflict with the Möngke's administration of North China and intimacy with him was not a recommendation under Möngke's reign.

60. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 119/2937–40.

61. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 119/2941.

62. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 119/2941.

63. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 119/2942–43.

64. Rashīd al-Dīn's statement (Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors of Genghis Khan*, 223) that Möngke sent "Muqali *Guyang*" with his brother Qubilai to conquer Dali 大理 seems to refer to Nayan's uncle Ba'atur 霸突魯 (cf. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 119/2942), but in any case confirms the already strong link of Qubilai and the family of Muqali.

Muqali's old armies were mostly decommissioned under Möngke as well. In the *tammachi* [permanently stationed garrison] army in Henan, part of the Muqali's old command, relatives of Chinggis Qan's companion Boroghul (of the Hü'üshin family) replaced Muqali's relatives of the Jalayir family in command in 1252. In 1255, most of the *tammachi* soldiers in Hebei, again part of Muqali's old army, were demobilized. Matsuda Kōichi notes that the Henan army essentially disappears from the historical record in 1252, not to reappear until Qubilai Qa'an's reign in 1269.<sup>65</sup>

Since his entourage already included the main members of Muqali's family, it is no surprise that when Qubilai ascended to the throne Muqali's family regained a level of prestige it had not seen since 1229. Nayan had died, but his cousin Antong 安童 became one of the chiefs of Qubilai's administration. Many of the *tammachi* soldiers demobilized under Möngke were again mobilized in 1262, and the Henan army was transferred from Hü'üshin family commanders back to the Jalayir. Muqali's descendants received a hereditary position as commander in the *keshigten* (guards) of Qubilai and his descendants.<sup>66</sup> This enduring high position under Qubilai and his successors is reflected in the later biographical and historical material all of which magnify Muqali's accomplishments. Thus the little attention given to Muqali and his military exploits is inexplicable in any account either written or extensively edited under Qubilai Qa'an.

- 4) As was noted above, Shigi Qutuqu returned to honor under Möngke Qa'an.<sup>67</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn mentions that Shigi Qutuqu had a very long life and "died during Ariq-Böke's rebellion."<sup>68</sup> The language here and the little attention given to Shigi Qutuqu's legacy under Qubilai Qa'an suggests that he may well have supported Ariq-Böke's rebellion.<sup>69</sup> Certainly he is nowhere mentioned

65. Matsuda, "On the Ho-nan Mongol Army," 41–42; Hsiao, *The Military Establishment of the Yuan Dynasty*, 76.

66. Hsiao, *Military Establishment*, 76; Matsuda, "On the Ho-nan Mongol Army," 42; Atwood, "Ulus Emirs, Keshig Elders, Signatures, and Marriage Partners: The Evolution of a Classic Mongol Institution."

67. I do not find convincing Ratchnevsky's argument that the fact that Shigi Qutuqu was not given an actual office under Möngke indicates that he was not one of Möngke's supporters (Ratchnevsky, "Šigi Qutuqu," 93). By the time of Möngke, he was at minimum 67 years old, and probably over 70 (assuming the 1180 date of his birth argued by Ratchnevsky himself in "Šigi Qutuqu," 76–77). An honored retirement would be exactly what one expects at his age.

68. Rashiduddin/Thackston, *Jami'u't-tawarikh*, 47.

69. Ratchnevsky, "Šigi Qutuqu," 90. Ratchnevsky is in error, however, in treating the Qutuqu of Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 120/2962, as Shigi Qutuqu. Rather he is the son of the Merkid Baljuna Covenanter Sha'ughur, mentioned in *Yuan shi* 123/3025; see Yao Jing'an, *Yuan shi renming suoyin*, 167, 165.

among Qubilai's partisans in 1260–64, as one would expect of so prominent a person, had he actually supported Qubilai. Although one of Qubilai's early Confucian acquaintances, Zhang Dehui, had recommended Shigi Qutuqu as a chief official in 1248, the more influential Liu Bingzhong 劉秉忠 wrote the prince in 1251 that, "The number of households in the whole society exceeds 1,000,000, but since the time of Judge Qutuqu Noyan [i.e. 1234–35], the taxes and corvée has been extremely heavy, and when one adds to them the supplying of military mounts, the harassment by envoys, and the extortion of the officials, the commoners cannot meet the demands and so they flee."<sup>70</sup> Liu's opinion is undoubtedly the one that prevailed at Qubilai's court as khan. This and the significant possibility that Shigi Qutuqu supported Ariq-Böke's rebellion essentially eliminates the possibility that a history dramatically overstating his historical role could have been either composed or allowed to survive extensive editing under Qubilai's reign.

- 5) The SHM's §274 treats the subjugation of the caliph of Baghdad as essentially complete under Chormaqan, during the reign of Ögedei. Such a treatment would be quite incongruous after Hüle'ü's actual sack of Baghdad in 1258, or even after the summers of 1252 and 1253, when Hüle'ü was dispatched to conquer the caliph once and for all.<sup>71</sup> Any account written in the latter part of Möngke's reign would presumably stress the continued insubordination of the caliph, in order to explain implicitly why Möngke needed to deal with this outstanding issue.

All of these themes can be explained only by ascribing the entire SHM to the period before Qubilai Qa'an. No part of it can be plausibly linked to the interests, ideas, and personnel of Qubilai Qa'an's court. Igor de Rachewiltz's belief that the SHM was extensively revised "in the 1260s by the Mongol editors attached to the Department of National (=Mongol) History established in 1261"<sup>72</sup> is untenable. The stark contrast on point after point between the actual *Shengwu qinzheng lu* of Ögedei Qa'an and the SHM account demonstrates the radical difference between the SHM author's concerns and sympathies and those of Qubilai's court. This analysis (so far) still holds open the possibility that Part III (§§269–281) was produced sometime in the two decades of conflict from 1241 to 1261 and then later attached to the rest of the work,<sup>73</sup>

70. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 157/3689.

71. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 3/46–47; Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, II, 607ff.

72. Igor De Rachewiltz, "The Secret History of the Mongols: Some Fundamental Problems," 6.

73. Cf. de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, xliii.

but argues against it being either compiled under Qubilai Qa'an's reign<sup>74</sup> or else extensively edited under Qubilai Qa'an or his successors.<sup>75</sup>

### *The Unity of the Text*

As this review has demonstrated, there is a striking unity of themes and positions in the extant SHM text. Such a unity might not work against the assumption of differing dates if those dates were sufficiently close that the supplement could be the work of the same hand as the original text. While differing on whether the colophon applied to the initial composition, Ding Qian and Naka Michiyo both took this position. Ding Qian held that while the material on Chinggis Qan (Parts I and II) was written in 1228 (the colophon's year of the mouse), Part III was written around the time of Ögedei's death in 1241.<sup>76</sup> Conversely, Naka Michiyo and Ishihama Juntarō held that while Part I was written around the time of Chinggis Qan's death in 1227, Parts II and III were added in 1240 (the colophon's year of the mouse).<sup>77</sup> Either way, the dates were close enough that the writer could be the same in both instances.

With the growing recognition that Parts II and III contain numerous anachronisms that put their earliest possible composition in the 1250s or later, the time gap between any presumed 1228 composition of the main text and later supplements grew larger and larger.<sup>78</sup> While many writers have thus come to accept that the SHM was composed over a period of decades by differing hands, no one has yet identified the differences in style, vocabulary, themes, and/or political position in the text that would be expected under such a scenario. Doerfer contented himself with claiming that William Hung's assertion of the unity of the text was an "unproven hypothesis," thus implying that the SHM must be assumed to be a composite text until proven a unified one.<sup>79</sup> In his 1965 statement of his position on the date and authorship of the text, Igor de

74. Cf. de Rachewiltz, "The Secret History of the Mongols: Some Fundamental Problems," 7.

75. De Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, xxxiii.

76. Ding, "Yuan mishi zuozhe renming kao," 1923 (2a).

77. Naka, *Chingisu Kan jitsuroku*, 2–4; Ishihama, "Genchō hishi kō," 5.

78. In the 1960s, Doerfer maintained the by now quite untenable hypothesis that much of the material on Ögedei's reign was actually written around the time of his death, and was only edited at certain parts in the reign of Qubilai Qa'an ("Zur Datierung," 108).

79. Doerfer, "Zur Datierung," 91.

Rachewiltz issued a call for Mongolists to investigate stylistic discontinuities between Parts I and II, which he claimed were drafted in 1228, and Part III, which he considered was composed much later.<sup>80</sup> This call was reissued in 1986–87<sup>81</sup> but has not, as far as I know, yet been answered, even in Rachewiltz's own 2004 two-volume translation and commentary. In contrast, as Yu Dajun, who supports the unity of the text, has written:

From the style, the contents, the poems and songs which they contain, and other things, there is no adequate reason to maintain that the first ten *juan* [chapters] and the last two *juan* (called the “main” and “subsequent” collection) are two different works written at different times at an interval of several decades.<sup>82</sup>

Ironically, even Igor de Rachewiltz, as a strong proponent of the 1228 date and the necessary consequence of a composite text, acknowledges an at least apparent uniformity<sup>83</sup> and writes that the text is “totally uncontaminated by Buddhist and foreign, i.e. non-Mongol, cultural elements. In this respect it is the purest and most genuine product of Mongolian literature.”<sup>84</sup> This is a surprising feature to find in a work which he considers to have been massively re-edited and supplemented with a whole new chapter during one of the Mongol empire's most cosmopolitan eras, when Buddhism was just being introduced on a large scale.

Nor can the proponents of composition by multiple authors agree on where the text should be divided. Okada Hidehiro, for example, reflects the Japanese position held since Naka Michiyo when he argues that, “Whereas the first part deals with the rise of Chinggis Qan to power up to his enthronement in 1206 and thus has the consistency as a pseudo-historical romance, the second part is a loose collection of unrelated episodes, of a nature fit to be called a sequel to the main body.”<sup>85</sup> By contrast, Igor de Rachewiltz reflects Ding Qian's viewpoint when he assesses the whole account of Chinggis Qan's life (including Part II which Okada sees as a loose collection of unrelated episodes)

80. Igor de Rachewiltz, “Some Remarks on the Dating of the *Secret History of the Mongols*,” *Monumenta Serica* 24 (1965), 205.

81. Igor de Rachewiltz, “Brief Comments on Professor Yü Ta-chün's Article ‘On the Dating of the *Secret History of the Mongols*,’” 309.

82. Yü Da-djün, “On the Dating of the *SHM*,” 295; Yu Dajun, “‘Menggu mishi’ chengshu niandai kao,” 153.

83. De Rachewiltz, “Brief Comments on Professor Yü Ta-chün's Article,” 309.

84. De Rachewiltz, “*The Secret History of the Mongols*: Some Fundamental Problems,” 8.

85. Okada, “The Chinggis Khan Shrine and the *Secret History of the Mongols*,” 291.

as “very vivid,” but the material on Ögedei as “much less coherent and quite fragmentary—a sort of afterthought or supplement.”<sup>86</sup> Gerhard Doerfer, erroneously discounting the evidence against Ögedei having been enthroned in 1228 (on which see below), suggested that the account of the coronation of Ögedei Qa’an would have made a fitting conclusion to the original 1228 text of the work, emphasizing how the great work of Chinggis Qan would live on in a new generation. He also added to his purported “original version” of the SHM Ögedei’s speech concerning the organization of the *keshigten* or imperial bodyguard.<sup>87</sup>

The arbitrariness of these divisions is evident in the lack of consensus among their proponents. If pressed to find any major break in quality in the work, I might personally prefer to place it after Part I. Yet it must be noted that many of the most famous and vivid episodes of the whole work occur in parts II and III—the great debate over the succession and Köke Chos’s stirring defense of Börte as a victim of violence and rape, the description of Tolui sacrificing his life for Ögedei Qa’an, the insults cast by the princes at each other, “Merkid bastard,” “woman with a quiver,” and so on. Such passages hardly seem to me to merit the description as “afterthought” or “sequel.” Secondly, the SHM author is hardly the only historian to be strong on some topics and weak or uninterested in others. Indeed the SHM’s unwavering focus on internal, Mongol matters and lack of interest in foreign affairs is a consistent theme running through the whole work. Far from indicating a lack of unity, the work’s confused and perfunctory account of the foreign conquests in Part II and III links it all the more clearly to the likewise internal preoccupations of Part I. In any case, the inability of the proponents of the 1228 dating to agree on whether Part II was composed together with Part I or Part III casts serious doubt on the whole assumption that there is any obvious discontinuity in style or narrative stance between the three parts.

So far, then, the proponents of the 1228 date have only assumed and not demonstrated from the text itself the disunity implicit in their hypothesis. By contrast, I can point to a number of areas of strong *continuity* between the differing parts of the SHM text which make it highly unlikely that it was compiled over a period of decades:

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86. De Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, xxviii.

87. Doerfer, “Zur Datierung,” 102, 108.

- 1) Parts I and II both contain numerous cases of the women in Chinggis Qan's life—his mother Ö'elün (§§78, 118, 244), his first wife Börte (§§118, 245), and his Tatar wives Yisügen (§155) and Yisüi (§254)—giving him crucial advice, particularly on political matters.
- 2) Similarly, Bo'orchu, Muqali, and Shigi Qutuqu are frequently linked together in Parts I and II as the inner circle of Chinggis Qan's advisers, dissuading him from wrath (§§203, 242, 260).
- 3) The freedom of the author in criticizing Chinggisids is quite striking in all three parts. In Part I one may cite: Chinggis Qan's fear of dogs (§66), his murder of his brother Begter (§76–78), the rape of his wife Börte by the Merkid (§99–101, 110, 254), his willingness to countenance slander against his brothers (§244–45), and Cha'adai's narrow-mindedness (§243). In Part II one may cite Cha'adai's willingness to insult Jochi and expose his own mother's shame (§§254–45), and Jochi, Cha'adai, and Ögedei's greedy refusal to give their father Chinggis a share of the spoils (§260). Finally, in Part III one may cite Batu's cowardice (§275),<sup>88</sup> Güyüg's arrogance and violence (§§276–77), and the four faults in Ögedei's reign (§281).

As was mentioned *a propos* the SHM passage where Harghasun ridiculed Batu, commoners who reviled the Chinggisids had their mouths stuffed with stones.<sup>89</sup> One can imagine a single highly privileged author having such freedom, but it is hard to think of several having such freedom, still less of such freedom surviving the deliberations of a compilation committee. Certainly the later *Shengwu qinzheng lu* edited out every single instance cited above, even those criticisms that would have legitimated Qubilai Qa'an's enthronement.

- 4) Moreover, among the pieces of critical or embarrassing information listed above, we find items about Chinggis Qan's sons Jochi, Cha'adai, and Ögedei, and their sons Batu, Büri, and Güyüg, but none about Tolui or Möngke.
- 5) The anachronistic placing of Shigi Qutuqu's rise and the granting of Muqali's title as *gui ong* to 1206 involves a consistent (if highly distorted) vision of Mongol administration in North China that is carried through in Parts I, II, and III. Had Parts II or III been added later decades later, under Qubilai, for example, it is hard to image the editor/continuator not adding in something about Muqali's appointment as viceroy of North China in 1217, about Yelü

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88. This accusation was based on his inability to take the city of Kozel'sk; cf. Rashid al-Din, *Successors of Genghis Khan*, 60.

89. Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, II, 502–05; Rashid al-Din, *Successors of Genghis Khan*, 74–75, 212–213.

Chucaï's 耶律楚材 administration under Ögedei, or about Shigi Qutuqu's appointment as *jarghuchi* and census-taker in North China in 1234, regardless of how much it might implicitly contradict the previous account of the 1206 coronation.

- 6) The role of non-Mongols in administration is played down in all three parts, an oft-cited example of which is the complete silence about the Baljuna Covenant of 1203 in Part I. The list of the Baljuna Covenanters makes it clear that it was primarily one between Chinggis Qan and supporters outside his inner circle, particularly non-Mongols; as such it was part of his attempt to reassure these newcomers of their place in his entourage.<sup>90</sup> Among non-Mongol officials, only Muslims are mentioned by name (in Parts I and II), while Kitans and Uyghurs are completely ignored. The complete omission of Kitans and Uyghurs is particularly striking in the section on Ögedei Qa'an (Part III), when in point of historical fact Kitans and Uyghurs dominated the sedentary administrations of North China through almost his entire reign.

The preference for Muslim administrators over Kitan or Uyghur ones is also linked to the SHM's high regard for Shigi Qutuqu. In his administration, Qutuqu twice came into direct conflict with Yelü Chucai, once over the definition of the household and once over the distribution of appanages in North China.<sup>91</sup> In the first case, Shigi Qutuqu's proposal to define one household per each adult male is explicitly said to be the Western, i.e. Turkestani, way of doing things. Elsewhere in the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* of Ögedei Qa'an, the rules for the census in "the Western regions" are explicitly ascribed to Mahmud Yalavach.<sup>92</sup> On this issue, then, Shigi Qutuqu and Mahmud Yalavach were

90. Of the fifteen known Baljuna Covenanters, two are Muslims (Hasan and Jabar Khoja 札八兒火者), one a Turkic Christian (Chinqai), two Kitan Buddhists (Yelü Tuhua and Yelü Ahai), three are from non-Mongol peoples of the Mongolian plateau (Qaidu 懷都 of the Kereyid, Botu of the Ikires, Sha'ughur 紹古兒 of the Merkid), five are low-born Mongols (Ajuluq 阿朮魯 of the Oronar, Sörgen Noyan 雪里堅那顏 of the Salji'udai, Sübe'etei and his brother Qurughun 忽魯渾 of the Uriyangqan, Taghai Ba'atur of the Suldus), one is a relatively high-born Mongol (Jürchedei of the Uru'ud), and one is Chinggis Qan's estranged brother Qasar (see Cleaves 1955: 396–403; Barthold's undocumented inclusion of Danishmand Hajib was perhaps a conjecture from his presence in Chinggis Qan's early entourage). Of these only Hasan, Sübe'etei, Taghai Ba'atur, Jürchedei, and Qasar are even mentioned in the SHM, and Sübe'etei and Taghai Ba'atur are both given a pre-Baljuna pedigree, one which in Sübe'etei's case is certainly erroneous. One may plausibly assume that the SHM deliberately played down the Baljuna Covenant as a historical incident in order to sideline the Baljuna Covenanters as political category in the Chinggisid elite.

91. Yelü/Xie, *Zhanran jushi wenji*, 328–29; cf. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 146/3459–60.

92. *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, 99a; cf. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 2/30.



agreed in preferring to apply the Turkestani and Central Asian census practices in North China, rather than the Jin dynasty traditions which Yelü Chucai preferred. While there is no explicit statement that the Turkestani administrators were also allied with Shigi Qutuqu on the issue of appanages, there is no record of any opposition to the allocation of appanages in Central Asia, such as Yelü Chucai sustained in North China. The evidence thus indicates that Shigi Qutuqu preferred Turkestani personnel and methods in administering North China. The SHM author agreed and throughout the work treated this point of view as the only true Chinggisid heritage in administration.

None of these distinctive features of the SHM are found in the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* or in the additional material added to the later compendia of Mongol imperial history, the Chinese *Yuan shi* and the Persian *Jâmi' al-Tawârikh*. Given the absence of documented stylistic or historiographical discontinuities between Parts I, II, and III, the thesis of the composition of the SHM over several decades by many hands remains unproven. Igor de Rachewiltz has spoken of Yuan and Ming-era editors "interpolating, transferring, deleting and adding material (which would explain the internal historical and chronological inconsistencies, as well as other puzzling aspects of the text) and including the section on Ögödei as a continuation or supplement."<sup>93</sup> Yet as my analysis has attempted to show, the vast majority of the historical and chronological inconsistencies are not *internal* inconsistencies, in which one part of the SHM text contradicts another, but *external* contradictions, in which the SHM text contradicts all the other known sources. Since many of the sources contradicting the SHM and giving us the more accurate chronological and geographical framework on the Mongol conquests are exactly those dating from the Yuan (i.e., the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* and other sources written after 1260) and the early Ming (especially the *Yuan shi* itself), it is strange to accuse those editors, who gave us the very sources we are using to find flaws in the SHM, for creating in the first place all the errors we find there!

### *The Arguments for a 1228 Date: The Altan tobchi Text*

Given all of the evidence against it, what arguments have the proponents presented for their theory of a 1228 composition with a supplement? In short, the arguments offered have focused not on the internal evidence of the current

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93. de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, xxxii; cf. 914, 941 of his commentary.

text, but on the external evidence of the differences between the *Altan tobchi* text and the YCMS text, the colophon, the title, and above all on the historical data about when *yeke qurilta*, or great assemblies, were actually held.

Igor de Rachewiltz first pointed out that the text of the SHM copied into the *Altan tobchi* does not have any of the material on Ögedei Qa'an.<sup>94</sup> Igor de Rachewiltz also later noted that the material on the debate over the succession to Chinggis Qan (§254–55), was likewise absent, although the material immediately before and after is found in the *Altan tobchi*. This is particularly significant for the 1228 hypothesis, since this section has long been recognized as showing signs of post-1251 composition.<sup>95</sup> De Rachewiltz thus concluded that the SHM text incorporated into the *Altan tobchi* was an earlier stage of the text before the addition of the later material on the succession and Ögedei's reign was added in.<sup>96</sup>

This theory, however, will not stand up to critical examination. Its essence is the claim that the *Altan tobchi* text represents in some sense a witness to the 1228 text before later editing altered it. Yet we see in the *Altan tobchi* text numerous passages which were quite certainly written well after 1228. Although almost all of Part I's clearly anachronistic texts fall within an unfortunate lacuna (§§177–207) in the *Altan tobchi*'s incomplete text of the SHM, four of the six particular anachronisms that I have listed in the survey of Part II are found in the *Altan tobchi* text, including the one showing the second to latest date, the appointment of Mahmud Yalavach and Masqud Beg as *darughachis*.<sup>97</sup> As we have seen the *terminus a quo* for that passage is 1246. In fact, the absence of the passage on the conflict over the succession is the only significant difference in Part II between the *Altan tobchi* text and the YCMS text. A separate examination of the internal evidence for the date of Part II in the *Altan tobchi* text and the YCMS text would result in dates that are little different: 1246–1260 for the *Altan tobchi* as opposed to 1251–1260 for the YCMS. Both were quite certainly written after Ögedei's death and thus the argument that the *Altan*

94. de Rachewiltz, "Some Remarks on the Dating of the SHM," 197–98; *The Secret History of the Mongols*, xxxii, liv–lix.

95. de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 923, 937.

96. de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, lvii–lix)

97. <sup>9</sup>As for the seventh, the forms of the city names Xuandezhou/Xuandefu and Dongchang, the *Altan tobchi* forms are too corrupt to be certain what the original text had, although it may be noted that de Rachewiltz himself sees it likely that the *Altan tobchi* text had the post-1263 form of Xuandefu (see his *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 890).

*tobchi* text is a witness to any supposed 1228 version of the text is groundless.

If the *Altan tobchi* text is not significantly earlier than the YCMS text, why then is the succession passage missing? The reason is fairly obvious: the passage deleted in the *Altan tobchi* was one of the most scandalous in the history of the Mongol empire, where Cha'adai calls Jochi a "bastard offspring (*chul ulja'ur*) of the Merkid" and Chinggis Qan's companion Köke Chos acknowledges that she was in fact violated. That most subsequent Mongols found this episode deeply embarrassing is clear from Rashîd al-Dîn's treatment of the same incident in his biography of Jochi. First he recounts an elaborate and highly implausible story in which the hostile Merkids escorted Börte, already pregnant with Jochi, to the court of Chinggis Qan's patron To'oril Ong Qan, who kept her safe until sending her back to Chinggis. The obvious point of this story is to maintain Börte's chastity from the charge of rape by the Merkid. He then adds: "And because of \_\_\_\_\_, the path of unity was trodden upon both sides between [Jochi] and Tolui and his family and none of them ever uttered that taunt but regarded his \_\_\_\_\_ as genuine." The crucial phrases are left blank.<sup>98</sup>

Rashîd al-Dîn's reference to "that taunt," which makes sense only given the story-line we read in the SHM, in which Börte was not pregnant, and held as a prize by a hostile Merkid chief, indicates that the Persian historian himself did not believe the exculpatory story he transmitted about Jochi's birth. The fact that he would transmit such a manufactured version and even then omit a key word (*nasab* "genealogy, parentage," or something like it) in denying the accusation demonstrates the extreme sensitivity of any such accusation that Börte was unchaste and Jochi a bastard. Given this fact, it is easily understandable that sensitive readers/copyists of the SHM much preferred not to transmit such a scandalous episode and left it blank. Thus, comparing the evidence, bowdlerization by a copyist seems a far more plausible reason for the absence of this particular episode from the *Altan tobchi* version than any difference in date of composition between the two versions of the SHM.

As for the omission of the text on Ögedei from the *Altan tobchi* version, this too fits what we know of the overall seventeenth century reception of the SHM text. Contrary to what we might think, the Mongol editors of the seventeenth century were by no means averse to simply deleting large chunks

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98. Rashîd al-Dîn, *Successors of Genghis Khan*, 98; cf. Rashiduddin/Thackston, *Jami'u't-tawarikh*, II, 348.

of the SHM text as they copied it. The text of the SHM appears to have been rediscovered sometime in the seventeenth century after at least a century in which legend cycles about Chinggis Qan, particularly that found in the *Chinggis khaghan-u Altan tobchi*,<sup>99</sup> had become the dominant written source about the Mongol nation's great founder. This legendary material had radically different concerns from the SHM, ones congruent (of course) with the fifteenth and sixteenth-century environment from which they emerged. The excessively archaic SHM was not, however, congruent with these concerns, and its rediscovery was not given a hearty welcome. (Again the fact that we today see the SHM as more historically accurate is irrelevant.)

Comparing the versions of the SHM text as incorporated into the seventeenth century chronicles, all of them contain large block omissions. The text of the SHM in the *Altan tobchi* is the most complete but even it contains a massive lacuna from §177 to §207. The fact that the later *Asaragchi neretü-yin teüke* contains snippets of text from the SHM in those sections omitted by the *Altan tobchi* indicates that this lacuna was not due to the absence of this portion of the SHM in the text(s) circulating in the seventeenth century, but rather by an act of excision, deliberate or accidental. Likewise, the abridged Anonymous *Altan tobchi* deleted all material from the SHM after §96 (not incidentally, just before the episode of Börte being captured by the Merkids), while Saghang Sechen's *Erdeni-yin tobchi* deleted everything after §93.<sup>100</sup> Byamba's *Asaragchi neretü-yin teüke* included only random snippets from the SHM material between the first coronation of Chinggis Qan (§123) and his death.<sup>101</sup> Clearly, it is hazardous to assume that the absence of a large part of the SHM in one of these chronicles' texts must mean that it was not there in the manuscripts the seventeenth-century compilers used.

Why might the SHM text on Ögedei have been deleted? In the Mongol chronicle tradition, the conquests and subjugation of enemies was completed by Chinggis Qan. The subsequent emperors are primarily significant as patrons of Buddhism. Both the *Altan tobchi* and following it, Byamba's *Asaragchi neretü-yin teüke*, take their account of Ögedei solely from Tibetan sources

99. See Dorongg-a, *Cinggis qagan-u takil-un sudur orosiba—Monggol qaguci teüken nom-un baglag-a*.

100. Bawden, *The Mongol Chronicle Altan Tobči*, 127–128; Saḡang Secen, *Erdeni-yin tobci* ('Precious Summary'): *A Mongolian Chronicle of 1662*, 55–56.

101. Shagdaršüren and Lee, *Byamba-yin Asarayči neretü(-yin) teüke (Ekhbichigiin sudlagaa)*, 22–34.

that emphasizes his priest-patron relationship with the Sajaba (Sa-skya-pa) lamas.<sup>102</sup> Since this Buddhist-focused account was much more relevant to chroniclers writing after the Mongols' sixteenth-century Second Conversion to Buddhism, it is plausible to hypothesize that Lubsang-Danzin here decided, as would Saghang Sechen and other chroniclers after him, to omit superfluous quotations from a history that seemed filled with details both unedifying and uninteresting.

In summary then, the differences in textual completeness of the SHM between the *Altan tobchi* text and the YCMS text, are better explained as results of the interests of the later Mongolian copyists than they are as a reflection of differing redactions of the SHM archetype from which they were drawn.

### *The Arguments for a 1228 Date: The Title and Coverage*

At the beginning of the YCMS version of the SHM one finds a phrase grammatically isolated from the rest of the text: *Chinggis Qa'an-u huja'ur* "The Origin of Chinggis Qa'an." In the table of contents to his translation of the SHM, Naka Michiyo recognized that this was a separate title, and treated it as the title of the work's first chapter (*juan*).<sup>103</sup> Ishihama Juntarō, however, pointed out that as no other chapter in the work has a special subtitle, "The Origin of Chinggis Qa'an" must be the title of the original work as a whole. Following Naka in seeing a two-stage composition, first Part I and then Part II and III, Ishihama argued that this must have been the original title of Part I, and that Parts II–III were only added later under Qubilai Qa'an, at which time also the original title was replaced with that present title of *Secret History of the Mongols*, in order to distinguish it from the *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, then being produced by revising the SHM.<sup>104</sup> Igor de Rachewiltz agreed in part, arguing that the title would fit the whole biography of Chinggis Qan (i.e. Parts I and II), but would be inappropriate for a work that includes an almost complete account of his son Ögedei Qa'an's reign.<sup>105</sup> In fact, of course, *huja'ur* "root, origin" (classical *ijaghur*, modern *yazguur*) is used in Mongolian primarily to

102. *Altan tobchi*, 131a–132a; Shagdarüren and Lee, *Byamba-yin Asarayçi neretü(-yin) teüke*, 37–39.

103. Naka, *Chingisu Kan jitsuroku*, i.

104. Ishihama, "Genchō hishi kō," 4–6.

105. De Rachewiltz, "Some Remarks on the Dating of the *Secret History of the Mongols*," 191–93; cf. his *The Secret History of the Mongols*, xxxii, xliii–xlv)

refer to lineage or ancestry. In that sense, one must admit that Naka's original insight was correct and that it is only the genealogy in §§1–60 which is the true "Origin/Genealogy of Chinggis Qa'an."<sup>106</sup> To say that the term "origin" would cover his death, but would not cover his son's reign is arbitrary; strictly speaking it does not apply to either. In any case, I would agree with Uemura Seiji (1956: 112–13) who, even though he supported the 1228 idea, conceded that using the title or subtitle "The Origin of Chinggis Qan" to argue for a particular date would go too far in piling hypothesis upon hypothesis.<sup>107</sup>

Antoine Mostaert also argued against William Hung's claim of 1264 as the date:

His readers, certainly, would have been very happy if in his article, Mr. Hung had given his reasons why in his opinion, the author of the *SH* was able to pass over in silence everything that had happened since the end of the reign of Ögödei up to the year 1264. This period of twenty-four years saw the death of Ögödei, two long regencies, two imperial reigns, the rise to power of the junior branch under Möngke, the completion of the conquest of Persia, the resumption of war with the Sung, the accession to the throne of Qubilai, the revolt of Ariγ-böke, and his submission. If it is true that the *SH* was completed in the year of the rat in 1264, one would well have the right to be astonished to find no mention of any of these events, all of first importance. It is on the reason for this silence on the part of the author of the chronicle which we would like to learn the views of Mr. Hung.<sup>108</sup>

Igor de Rachewiltz deployed the same argument against Yu Dajun's proposed date of 1252.<sup>109</sup> While proponents of a date under Möngke have fewer missing events to explain—only the death of Ögödei, two long regencies, one imperial reign and part of a second, and the rise to power of the junior branch under Möngke—they still need to answer Mostaert's quite legitimate demand.

The reason, however, is not hard to find when one remembers the limits on free speech by non-Chinggisids alluded to earlier. A writer narrating Chinggis Qan and Ögedei Qa'an's deeds in first years of Möngke's reign would find some (but by no means complete) safety in the fact that most of the Mongol protagonists were deceased: all of Chinggis Qan's wives and sons, his grandsons

106. This point is implicitly conceded by de Rachewiltz in *The Secret History of the Mongols*, xli.

107. Uemura, "Genchō hishi shōki," 112–13.

108. Mostaert, *Sur quelques passages de l'Histoire secrète des Mongols*, 265.

109. de Rachewiltz, "Brief Comments on Professor Yü Ta-chün's Article," 307.

Güyük and Büri, and his officers Muqali, Bo'orchu, Sübe'etei, and Chormaqan. Only the prince Batu, the officials Shigi Qutuqu and Naya'a, and of course Möngke himself were still alive, and the author says relatively little about the two Chinggisids, Batu and Möngke. Yet any telling of the story of the two controversial *quriltai*s of 1246 and 1251, both accompanied by executions and accusations of witchcraft, and of Güyük's reign and its aftermath, would involve handling much more sensitive information, particularly that about the reigning qa'an Möngke himself. The author had taken many risks already and presumably had powerful patrons, but covering the period after Ögedei's death in a language the authorities could read personally (unlike, for example, the Persian of Juvaini's *History of the World Conqueror* written around the same time) would have been very dangerous. Thus while the legitimacy of the coming of the reign to Tolui's son Möngke is hinted at, it is not directly stated. Still, this explanation can not wholly resolve Mostaert's objections to a 1264 date. A writer at that time would find events at least through the reign of Güyük also to be relatively innocuous, all of the principals being long dead. So while Mostaert's objection does not really present any obstacle to the 1252 date, it does have considerable force against the 1264 date.

### *The Arguments for a 1228 Date: The Colophon*

The final argument for 1228, and the one on which this date's proponents lay the greatest stress, lies in the fact that the colophon puts the composition of the history at a great assembly during the year of the mouse in the Mongolian heartland along the Kelüren (modern Kherlen) river: "The writing was finished on the *ghuran* [i.e. seventh] moon of the year of the mouse as a great assembly (*yeke qurilta*) assembled and when the *ordos* [palace tents] were camped between Shilgin-Cheg and . . . at the Seven Hills of Ködö'e Aral on the Kelüren" (§282). If we assume that the composition of the SHM must have been sometime between the death of Chinggis Qan and the early years of Qubilai Qa'an, then the possible years of the mouse fall in 1228, 1240, 1252, and 1264. Of these years, proponents of the 1228 date argue, only 1228 saw such a "great assembly" (*yeke qurilta*) at Ködö'e Aral, and hence 1228 is the only possible date. The fact that Part III, on the life of Ögedei was clearly written after 1228 then further gave rise to the argument that the colophon applied only to Part I (or perhaps Parts I and II) and that the latter part of the SHM must have been written some time later. Speaking of the argument that the colophon

was originally attached only to Part I, Uemura conceded that “This surmise has no distinctive evidence; it only gives some reasonable explanation for the contradiction between the colophon and the contents.”<sup>110</sup> This “contradiction between the colophon and the contents” is precisely the fact that while the only possible date for the colophon’s mouse year appeared to him to be 1228, the contents of Part III clearly post-dated 1228. In fact, as we have seen, all three parts, not just Part II or III, post-date 1228. I will moreover argue that mouse years other than 1228 also had *yeke qurilta* in the Mongol heartland. As a result, both sides of the supposed “contradiction” cease to exist.<sup>111</sup>

One of the earliest attempts to use the presence or absence of *quriltas* to identify the SHM’s date was that of Paul Pelliot. In response to René Grousset’s espousal of the 1252 date, he argued that the ambitions of Tolui’s branch would already have been obvious in the declining years of Ögedei’s reign, that is, in 1240.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, the annals for Qubilai (1260–94) are extremely

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110. Uemura, “Genchō hishi shōki,” 112.

111. Dating the mouse of the colophon to 1228 also implies, of course, that the colophon, now placed at the conclusion of Part III (about Ögedei Qa’an), had been moved by the editors from its supposed original place at the end of Part II (or Part I). Doerfer (“Zur Datierung,” 90–91) noted how in Persian histories one often found incidents dating to after the colophon which only records the conclusion of the initial draft. Perhaps more relevant than Persian scribal practices, Antoine Mostaert also pointed to a similar case with the later Mongolian chronicle *Bolor erike* (“Crystal Rosary”) of Rashipungug, whose colophon dates to 1775, but which has information from 1776; see his “Introduction” to *Bolor Erike: Mongolian Chronicle*, 9. These cases are not, however, exactly parallel to that being postulated for the SHM, since they involve the completion or touching up of on-going narratives and genealogies here and there within an already large and comprehensive work. What we are being asked to accept in the case of the SHM, however, is that a large supplement, amounting to one-tenth to one-fifth of the size of postulated original work, was added decades later and the colophon deliberately shifted to the end. In any case, even if some such alteration in the text were possible, that does not demonstrate that it *did* occur. Despite Doerfer’s implicit claim to the contrary, the burden of proof is always on the one emending the text. One may also mention that in the *Altan tobchi* text, supposedly a witness to the text before the incorporation of material on Ögedei, does not contain the colophon text. This fact underlines the utter lack of evidence presented to date to document that the colophon was ever placed immediately after the death of Chinggis Qan. Already in 1940, Ishihama Juntarō had protested Ding Qian’s implicit reliance on this kind of sizable emendation to fit the theory of the 1228 date: “One should not glibly treat the present text as suspect on the basis of one’s own theories” (Ishihama, “Genchō hishi kō,” 5).

112. His implication, that such a rivalry may have had something to do with the delay of Güyüg’s coronation after Ögedei’s death seems false; the only rivalries mentioned in Juvaini, our principal source for this period, are those between Güyüg, his mother Töregene, his nephew Shiremün, and his brother Köten (Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, 239–255).



full, and those of Möngke (1251–59) also fairly extensive compared to those of Ögedei (1229–41), and still more of the Chinggis–Ögedei interregnum (1227–29). Thus, if there had been a mouse year *qurilta* in Möngke's reign (1252), Pelliot argued that we would expect to find it recorded, while one in 1240 could well be passed over in our sketchy records: "We are poorly informed of the movements of Ögödäi in 1240, but the *Yüan shih* is more precise from the rise of Möngkä in 1251; one does not see how a 'great assembly' could have been held at Ködä'ä-aral in 1252."<sup>113</sup> Since he accepted the text's unity and was unaware of the full extent of the anachronisms within it, he thus considered 1240 to be the most plausible date.

Uemura Seiji agreed with Pelliot about the unlikelihood of 1252 or later dates, but argued that 1240 as well saw no great *qurilta*. Assuming from the first that only those mouse years before the Mongols moved their capital to North China in 1260 were really applicable, he noted that in 1240 the Mongol princes and nobles were almost all away on the great campaign in eastern Europe. Thus, while he acknowledged being unable to *prove* that there was no *qurilta* in 1240, he believed that all the circumstantial evidence told against the possibility.<sup>114</sup> Instead, following Ding Qian, who in 1901 had noted that the SHM itself mentions (§269) a great *qurilta* at Ködö'e Aral in the year of the mouse, at which Ögedei was enthroned as great khan, Uemura Seiji argued that 1228 was the only mouse year with a great *qurilta* in the right place. He added that since a great meeting of his family and officials a year after the great conqueror's death was the most fitting time to pen his biography, 1228 was still more likely candidate as the year of the mouse in question.<sup>115</sup> This proposal, however, raises a number of problems.

The first and most obvious problem with the idea that there was a 1228 coronation *qurilta* is that, again, all the other sources disagree with the SHM on this date. They place Ögedei's coronation not in 1228, but in the summer of 1229, a year of the cow.<sup>116</sup> Uemura Seiji solved this problem for the 1228

113. Pelliot, "Deux lacunes dans le texte mongol actuel de *L'Histoire secrète des Mongols*," 21.

114. Uemura, "Genchō hishi shōki," 109.

115. Uemura, "Genchō hishi shōki," 110.

116. *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, 98b; Yelü/Xie, *Zhanran jushi wenji*, 325; Tao Zongyi, *Nancun zhuogeng lu*, 18; Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 2/29–30, 110/2772; Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors of Genghis Khan*, 30–31. Some writers appear to have taken too far an ambiguous footnote to John Andrew Boyle's translation of Juvaini and concluded that the Persian historian believed the coronation

position by observing that in the *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, we find that Ögedei held an assembly at the *ordos* (“palace-tents”) of Chinggis Qan in the autumn (i.e., sometime in moons seven through nine) of 1228, at which time he also received an embassy from the Jin dynasty, one that spent moons nine to twelve on the road.<sup>117</sup> Dr. Uemura argued that the coronation of Chinggis’s successor would have been a very difficult issue, especially since the claims of Tolui as the youngest son had to be dealt with, and thus that the great coronation *qurilta* of 1229 actually had begun with this gathering in the autumn of 1228 at which the SHM was written.<sup>118</sup> He thus raised the rather implausible scenario of a year-long *qurilta*.

After William Hung proposed in 1951 that the SHM was written during an unrecorded *qurilta* at Ködö’e Aral between Qubilai Qa’an and his defeated rival brother Ariq-Böke, other authors concentrated on attacking this possibility on historical grounds. In 1963, Gerhard Doerfer used Rashîd al-Dîn’s account to demonstrate the utter implausibility of Hung’s hypothesis of a 1264 *qurilta*. Two years later, Igor de Rachewiltz added further ammunition against

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occurred in 1228. See Doerfer, “Zur Datierung,” 100 n.26; Ledyard, “The Mongol Campaigns in Korea,” 15 n.60; de Rachewiltz, “Brief Comments on Professor Yü Ta-chün’s Article,” 307–08. In a footnote to Juvaini’s statement “it being the year 626 [=A.D. 1228–9] Chaghatai took [Ögedei’s] right hand and Otegin his left and by the resolution of aged counsel and the support of youthful fortune established [Ögedei] upon the throne,” Boyle wrote: “Actually 1229, though it would appear from Juvaini’s narrative that the election took place in the spring of the year immediately following Chingiz-Khan’s death, i.e. in 1228” (Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, 187). As Boyle pointed out, Juvaini’s narrative *implies* that the coronation took place in the spring after Chinggis Qan’s death. The year he gives, however, 626 A.H., ran from November 30, 1228 to November 19, 1229 in the Christian calendar; since the zodiacal sign given for the preparations of the *quriltai* is Aries (March–April; Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, 184), the date Juvaini intended is unquestionably spring–summer, 1229. Since his date for Chinggis Khan’s death is 4 Ramazan, 624 (Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, 183), he was undoubtedly aware at some level that more than a year had elapsed between Chinggis Qan’s death and the coronation, however vague he was in his narrative.

117. Uemura, “Genchō hishi shōki,” 111–12; cf. *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, 98a, and Tuotuo, *Jin shi*, 115/2523.

118. It is, however, dubious whether the Mongols really did practice ultimogeniture (inheritance by the youngest son) in political offices, as was claimed by Juvaini (*History of the World Conqueror*, 549). One cannot find any consistent pattern of ultimogeniture in the Chinggisid dynasty. Certainly when Tolui’s line ascended to the throne, his widow put forward Tolui and her eldest son, Möngke, as great khan, not their youngest son, Ariq-Böke. Nor does ultimogeniture feature at all in the succession debates of SHM §254–55, where by contrast it is assumed that succession will be by primogeniture in the absence of any compelling reason against it.

William Hung's proposed 1264 date. Based on the Basic Annals of the *Yuan shi*, he demonstrated not only that there was no *qurilta* recorded in 1264, but that Qubilai Qa'an is known to have been in Shangdu in Inner Mongolia, and hence nowhere near Ködö'e Aral, throughout the entire summer of 1264. Since any great *qurilta* would have involved the presence of the khan, he thus confirmed that the date of 1264 is completely impossible.<sup>119</sup>

The upshot of these historical arguments was that a mouse year *qurilta* at Ködö'e Aral in 1264 was absolutely impossible, one in 1240 was unrecorded and quite unlikely, one in 1252 was unrecorded, and one in 1228 recorded, albeit problematically. In his 1965 paper, de Rachewiltz did not directly address the problem of the conflicting 1228–29 dates for Ögedei's coronation, implying that the election *qurilta* lasted over a whole year, from August, 1228, when the SHM was presented, to September, 1229, when Ögedei was finally elected *qa'an*.<sup>120</sup> In later works, citing the passages already adduced by Uemura Seiji on the *qurilta* in 1228, Professor de Rachewiltz switched to the position that there were two separate *quriltas*, one in 1228 when the SHM was written, and another in 1229, when Ögedei was elected as great khan.<sup>121</sup> While this avoids the unheard-of idea of a year-long *qurilta*, it raises the question of the completeness of our records of *quriltas*. Only one line in all the known Chinese sources, that from the *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, records an actual assembly (*hui* 會) in 1228, and that without the adjective "great" (*da* 大). If that is the case, can we really be so confident that there was not any such assembly in 1240 or 1252?

The answer depends largely on whether the *yeke qurilta* "great assembly" was a common, perhaps even biannual meeting (lunar New Year and summer) or else a relatively rare event, only for coronations. Most scholars have simply assumed the latter position without argument.<sup>122</sup> Other writers remain uncommitted on this issue; Elizabeth Endicott-West, for example, first defines the *quriltai* as "a conference or council of princes and nobles at which a

119. Hung, "Transmission," 491–92; Doerfer, "Zur Datierung," 91–97; de Rachewiltz, "Some Remarks on the Dating of the SHM," 194–95.

120. De Rachewiltz, "Some Remarks on the Dating of the SHM," 185–86, 199.

121. de Rachewiltz, "Brief Comments on Professor Yü Ta-chün's Article," 307–08; "The Secret History of the Mongols: Some Fundamental Problems," 4; *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 984–85.

122. See for example Joseph Fletcher's widely cited essay, "The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives," 26.

new ruler was acclaimed” but also recognizes the seasonal assemblies of the Xiongnu as “early predecessors of the Mongols’ *quriltai*.”<sup>123</sup> Only Yu Dajun has made a formal argument for this position. Relying on the Persian sources, where only a small number of meetings, those in 1206, 1229, 1234, and 1251 are called *quriltai*, he argued that the *qurilta* was no ordinary assembly.<sup>124</sup> The Chinese sources, too, are almost as sparing in their use of *dahui* 大會 “great assembly,” using the term only for 1205, 1206, 1229, 1234, 1251, and 1259.<sup>125</sup> That the Chinese and Persian sources, for political reasons, refuse to accord the assembly that elevated Güyüg as *qa’an* the dignity of the term *quriltai/dahui* confirms that they at least believed that there was a fairly sharp distinction between a *yeke qurilta* and a mere ordinary assembly.<sup>126</sup>

A closer examination of the *Yuan shi* records, however, makes such a strict distinction harder to sustain. In 1251, for example, the assembly that enthroned Möngke is duly called a *dahui* “great assembly.” But it also says he “again (*fu* 復) held a great assembly at the place Kōte’ü-Aral.”<sup>127</sup> What was the previous “great assembly” then? It was the assembly of great princes the year before at Alaḡ-Toghura’u (Ala-Qamaḡ in Juvaini), which had decided to enthrone Möngke. Yet this meeting is in its proper place mentioned only as a *hui* and Juvaini refuses it the title of a *quriltai*.<sup>128</sup> So was it a “great assembly” or a mere “assembly”? Similarly there are several lunar New Year assemblies of the princes recorded in Ögedei and Möngke’s reign. All these are called *hui* (“assembly”) and one took place in year 1234, before the *dahui* (“great assembly”) of that year.<sup>129</sup> According to the theory distinguishing “assemblies” and “great assemblies,” these all ought to be mere assemblies, not great ones. Yet the one in 1256 lasted 60 days, and the New Year assembly in 1259 is called a *dahui* (“great assembly”). Similarly, Yelü Chucai’s biography terms one spring

123. Endicott-West, “Imperial Governance in Yuan Times,” 525–527. *Quriltai* is the usual Persian spelling for what in the Mongolian of the SHM is written *qurilta*, presumably based on the western Mongolian dialect spoken in the Middle East.

124. Yu Dajun, “*Menggu mishi* chengshu niandai kao,” 145–47; Yü Da-djün, “On the Dating of the *Secret History of the Mongols*,” 279–83.

125. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 1/12, 13, 2/29, 33, 3/44, 53.

126. See Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, I, 250, and Song Lian, *Yuan shi* 2/38. This would be parallel to how the Persian sources deny Güyüg the higher title *qa’an*, calling him only a *khān* (see de Rachewiltz, “*Qan*, *Qa’an* and the Seal of Güyüg,” especially n. 8 and n. 34).

127. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 3/44.

128. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 3/44; Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, 263–264.

129. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 2/33, 34, 3/46, 49.

(i.e., lunar New Year) assembly in 1236 a “great assembly” (*dahui*).<sup>130</sup> So are the New Year’s feasts merely “assemblies” or rather “great assemblies”?

Other sources cast more doubt on the hypothesized strict distinction between great and ordinary *quriltas*. As ethnographers have shown, festivals and games in pre-revolutionary Mongolia revolved around winter assemblies on the lunar New Year, and summer assemblies with sports festivals, games, and various sorts of open-air worship.<sup>131</sup> Although their ostensible occasions differ, the main activities during the summer festivals, as seen in ethnographic observations and in nineteenth century ritual texts, show striking continuity with those attested during the Mongol empire.<sup>132</sup> The Song frontier official Zhao Gong 趙珙 in 1221, based on his observations among the Mongols in North China, described regular assemblies on the lunar New Year and the early summer:

On the first day of the first moon, they always worship Heaven, which they do also on the fifth of the fifth moon; this is a result of their dwelling permanently in Yanjing 燕京 and inheriting the Jin men’s delight in exchanging gifts and drinking at banquets.<sup>133</sup>

The summer meeting also had a politico-military purpose :

On every campaign or conquest, before they meet and plan, they decide on it during the third or fourth moons and circulate the order throughout their countries, and then again on the fifth of the fifth moon, they hold an assembly with feasting and plan together against whom the campaign will be that fall and then everyone returns to his country to avoid the summer heat and raise their livestock. When it comes to the eighth moon, they all gather at the capital in Yanjing and only then set out.<sup>134</sup>

While some of the details, such as the particular day of the summer meeting, and avoiding the heat, may apply only to the Mongols in North China, the idea of two annual assemblies, and the statement that every campaign is preceded by an “assembly with feasting” rings true for the Mongols as a whole.<sup>135</sup>

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130. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 146/3460.

131. Kabzińska-Stawarz, *Games of Mongolian Shepherds*.

132. See the introduction to Serruys’s *Kumiss Ceremonies and Horse Races: Three Mongolian Texts*.

133. Zhao Gong, “Meng-Da beilu jianzheng,” 11a.

134. Zhao Gong, “Meng-Da beilu jianzheng,” 8b.

135. Cf. Peng Daya and Xu Ting, “Hei-Da shilue jianzheng,” 10b–11a, where every military decision made by the khan is then discussed with the “bone and flesh kin,” that is paternal and

As we have seen, there are also instances of Mongols discussing business at the spring/lunar New Year assemblies; indeed according to Rashîd al-Dîn, the great *qurilta* of 1206 when Chinggis Qan was enthroned was just such a “beginning of spring” occasion.<sup>136</sup>

One may argue that coronation *quriltas* were of particular significance, and hence only they should be “great” (*yeke*) *qurilta*. Yet even the Persian writers and the *Yuan shi* give the name of *yeke quriltai* “great assembly” to the one in 1234. Since the 1234 *qurilta* did not enthrone an emperor but only decided on campaigns, did it really differ in kind from any of the other many military assemblies during summer? As Chen Binghe 陳彬和 pointed out in 1927, the Yuan author Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 in his *Nancun chuogeng lu* 南村輟耕錄 stated that “[I]n our dynasty, whenever they fete the great officials, they call it a great assembly (*dajuhui* 大聚會).” The term *dajuhui* here is the very one used in the interlinear translation of the SHM’s colophon to translate the Mongolian *yeke qurilta*.<sup>137</sup> Finally we have the undeniable fact that the major Mongolian source, the SHM, claims to have been written in a *yeke qurilta* during the year of the mouse, yet there was no meeting which the Persian historians, or the *Yuan shi* Basic Annals recognize as a *quriltai/dahui* “great assembly” in any year of the mouse.<sup>138</sup> As a result of all of these points, the rigid distinction of greater and lesser assemblies cannot be maintained; it is something the Persian and Chinese historians have imported into their narratives of Mongolian history, not a distinction the Mongols made themselves. (The reason for the distinction in the Chinese case, at least, may well be linked to the obvious disapproval shown by Zhao and Tao, among others, for the Mongols’ “delight in exchanging gifts and drinking at banquets.”) Two annual assemblies (in early spring and in summer–fall) were the rule, not the

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maternal relatives.

136. Rashduddin/Thackston, *Jami’u’t-tawarikh*, 204. In the seventeenth century Mongolian chronicle *Asaragchi neretü-yin teüke*, however, this assembly is dated to the 16th of the first moon of summer; see Shagdarsüren and Lee, *Byamba-yin Asarayçi neretü(-yin) teüke*, 27. This is, however, a guess based on SHM §81.

137. Tao, *Nancun zhuogeng lu*, 24/289; see Chen Binghe, “Xin xu” 新序, in *Yuanchao mishi* 元朝秘史, 26; Yu Dajun, “*Menggu mishi* chengshu niandai kao,” 147; Yü Da-djün, “On the Dating of the *Secret History of the Mongols*,” 281–82.

138. Yu Dajun tries to argue that the Mongolian of the colophon allows the convening of the great assembly to have actually been completed in 1251 a year before the composition of the SHM in 1252 (Yu Dajun, “*Menggu mishi* chengshu niandai kao,” 156–57; Yü Da-djün, “On the Dating of the *Secret History of the Mongols*,” 301–02); but de Rachewiltz rightly rejects this argument (“Brief Comments on Professor Yü Ta-chün’s Article,” 307).

exception, among the Mongols, and both of them could be and were referred to as *yeke qurilta* or “great assemblies.”

Thus de Rachewiltz’s 1228 assembly is theoretically a possible *yeke qurilta* when the SHM might have been written. By the same token, however, other dates also have to be reconsidered. In 1240, the great campaign in eastern and central Europe was already in full swing, along with lesser campaigns against the Song. If there was any summer when a *qurilta* was not held, this would have been it. Moreover, there is no evidence of any large-scale discussions or decision-making in the seventh moon of 1240. In the seventh moon of 1252, however, we find traces of an event that seems to have every aspect of a formal *qurilta* except the name:

Autumn. Seventh moon. The emperor ordered Qubilai to campaign against Dali 大理 [in Yunnan], and the princes Turghaq and Sali to campaign against Sindhu [i.e. India], Ked-Buqa to campaign against Molhid [i.e. the “Heretics” or Isma‘ilis], and Hüle’ü to campaign against the countries of the Sultan in the West. He issued an edict summoning the defending generals in the Song’s Jingnan 荆南, Xiangyang 襄陽, Fancheng 樊城, and Junzhou 均州 to surrender, and envoys came to adhere the emperor.<sup>139</sup>

Under normal Mongol practice, as we have seen, these sorts of orders would be given at an assembly in which all the relevant princes and commanders (along with others not mentioned) must have assembled and feasted as they discussed the planned campaigns. The presence of foreign envoys would add to the importance of the occasion. It seems somewhat arbitrary to say the assembly in 1228 could be a *yeke qurilta*, but this assembly in 1252 could not, simply because the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* uses the word *hui* “assembly” for the former, but the *Yuan shi*’s “Basic Annals of Möngke Qa’an” do not use it for the latter.

As a result of these considerations, we may say that while the historical record rules out an imperial *qurilta* at Ködö’e Aral in 1264 and might make it rather unlikely in 1240, both 1228 and 1252 would fit the situation of the colophon, given our present knowledge. Thus the claim that 1228 is the only year of the mouse with a great *qurilta* cannot be sustained.

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139. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 3/46; Sali was a Tatar, not a prince; see Rashiduddin/Thackston I, 1998: 48–49. *Turghaq* “day guard” is not a separate name but rather a title indicating Sali’s service in the guards. Since however the Ming editors clearly took Turghaq and Sali as separate names, I have translated them as separate.

*The Date of the Secret History: Conclusions*

Let us now draw together the threads of the discussion. If the analysis presented above is correct, the SHM is a unitary work, composed in a single style and full of partisan biases that run through all three parts. While there were certainly a few minor changes made during recopying under Qubilai Qa'an, the current text of the SHM cannot, as Igor de Rachewiltz has argued, be seen as "the product of later additions, deletions and other editorial changes carried out during the Yüan and early Ming periods."<sup>140</sup> Nor was it supplemented over the decades with a new chapter on Ögedei. Its errors are not those of a vacillating and self-contradictory series of editorial committees. Rather, they are in part the errors of fallible human memory decades after the events, for whom, for example, all the battles at Juyongguan 居庸關 Pass, all the sieges of Zhongdu 中都, and all the expeditions of Sübe'etei against the Qipchaqs had run together in the imagination. In another part they are those of a provincial who never left the Mongol heartland and had no sense of the geography of North China, still less of Turkestan and Iran. And in large part they are those of a brilliant but opinionated writer, willing to sacrifice the facts to fit his imperious vision of the Chinggisid family's destiny. This vision is that of an "old Mongol" who had little interest in and less sympathy with the conquered peoples and who, like his patron Möngke Qa'an, preferred Turkestanian administrators to Kitan or Turkic Christian ones. The unreconstructed Mongol Shigi Qutuqu, not the increasingly Confucianized family of Muqali, was his exemplar for a Mongol official ruling in North China. Since the historical and political perspective seen in the SHM matches the early years of Möngke's reign, we conclude that René Grousset, Louis Ligeti, and Yu Dajun are correct: the SHM was put into the present form during the reign of Möngke Qa'an. Of all the years of the mouse, 1252 makes by far the best sense of the data.

The only passage<sup>141</sup> in the whole work that is clearly incompatible with such a date is that in the latter part of §274: "Yisüder Qorchi was sent on campaign as the rear guard for Jalayirtai Qorchi who had gone before on campaign among the Jürchen and Koreans. A decree was given, 'Let him dwell there

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140. de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, xxxiii.

141. The alteration of original Söndiju (transcribing Xuandezhou) to Söndiwu (transcribing Xuandefu) can be dismissed as simply a copyist's "correction" of the text some time after 1263, and has no significance for the actual composition of the work as a whole.



as a *tamma* [permanent garrison soldier].” As mentioned earlier, first Naka Michiyo, and then Arthur Waley and Gari Ledyard have observed that this episode, here ascribed to Ögedei, without question took place in 1258.<sup>142</sup> Waley and Ledyard both drew the conclusion that the SHM must have been composed in the mouse year of 1264 at the earliest. As we have noted, such a date, by involving Qubilai Qa’an and his court historians in its composition, flies in the face of abundant internal evidence from all parts of the SHM.

There is, however, a theoretical possibility for a 1264 date, if we assume an otherwise unrecorded *qurilta* held by Qubilai’s rival brother Ariq-Böke at Ködö’e Aral. William Hung hypothesized one attended by Ariq-Böke and Qubilai together but, as we have seen, Igor de Rachewiltz rightly discounted this possibility. Nor can one readily conceive of such a politically delicate *qurilta* being used to resolve historical issues, or, if it was, that the resulting history would be so resolutely slanted against the positions for which the victor, Qubilai, stood. If the 1264 date for the composition of the SHM is to be at all plausible, the *yekke qurilta* mentioned would have to be one summoned and chaired by Ariq-Böke alone. The possibility is intriguing, at least. One can speculate in the line of William Hung that the entourage of Ariq-Böke held a great assembly to discuss their plight. Seeing the ruin of their ambitions, which were founded on continuity with the ideas and personnel of Möngke Qa’an, they sought to enshrine Möngke Qa’an’s vision, defeated politically, in the ideas of the future by writing a history of the empire.

Unfortunately, too many obstacles stand in the way of accepting this speculative scenario. First, we have no other example of a *qurilta*, great or small, being used to discuss surrender; always it is a forum for discussing conquests and planning victories. Second, Ariq-Böke in his years of defeat fled northwest, toward his own *ordos* in the Altai and to the Chaghatay Khanate in Turkestan which was his sole remaining opportunity for financial succor. It is thus hard to believe he continued to control the Ködö’e Aral region.<sup>143</sup> For this reason a purely Ariq-Bökid assembly at Ködö’e Aral on the Kherlen river seems as impossible as a joint one with Qubilai. And finally, such a history, as we noted in reference to Mostaert’s objections, would certainly go up at least through the middle of Möngke’s reign to show how Ariq-Böke’s favored path was that pioneered by Möngke Qa’an himself.

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142. See Ledyard’s “The Mongol Campaigns in Korea.”

143. Rashîd al-Dîn, *Successors of Genghis Khan*, 257–261.

Thus we return to the date 1252 as the only date for the SHM that makes sense of its contents. The sole outstanding problem is thus to offer a plausible explanation of how a notice on Möngke's campaign of 1258 came to be inserted verbatim into the work as an event in Ögedei Qa'an's reign. Part of the answer comes from Gari Ledyard's own conclusions about the chronological errors in the sources on Mongol-Korean relations.<sup>144</sup> Comparing this passage to others in the *Yuan shi* and Rashîd al-Dîn, he concluded that originally in a Qubilai-era Mongolian chronicle there were two events related to Korea and dated to horse years. One was the Korean dispatch of the Prince Ong Sun 王縉, together with *turghaq* (dayguards) and *keshigten* (guards, here nightguards) as hostages to the Mongols; this event really happened in 1241, a cow year, but was for some reason misdated to the horse year.<sup>145</sup> The second was the 1258 dispatch of Yisüder from Mongolia to assist Jalayirtai, a genuine horse year event. At some point, Ledyard argues, this chronicle's two supposedly horse year events were merged and mistakenly filed under the wrong horse year, i.e. 1234 in Ögedei's reign.

While Gari Ledyard's hypothesis that such a garbled Qubilai-era Mongolian chronicle was a source for the original SHM cannot be accepted, it does seem likely that such a chronicle supplied the information that was later interpolated into the SHM text under Qubilai. Yet as we have seen, the historians of Qubilai's era refrained from re-editing the SHM to fit their own, very different, conceptions of Mongolian history. Why then did they interpolate/edit the text in this one passage? The most plausible answer is that the original text of the SHM had a reference to the dispatch of troops to Korea under Ögedei, probably containing the names of those troops' commanders Tangghud and Sartaq Qorchi.<sup>146</sup> At some point, the text must have become garbled, quite possibly due to confusion between Tangghud and Sartaq, the personal names, and Tangghud/Tangut and Sartaq/Turkestan, the places.<sup>147</sup> A

144. Ledyard, "Mongol Campaigns in Korea," 12–16.

145. *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, 107a; Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 2/37.

146. Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 2/31, 32, 34, 208/4608.

147. Normally, Mongolian personal names derived from places or families have the suffix -dai/tai following (Mangghudai, Jürchedei, Uru'udai, Jalayirtai, Majartai, etc.) The absence of such a suffix in both of these names and the surrounding context of describing foreign conquests where the place names Tanguts and Turkestan (Sartaq) would not be out of place might have made the passage especially confusing. It is perhaps significant in this connection that Thackston in his translation of Rashiduddin also mistook Tangghud as an ethnonym: Rashiduddin/Thackston, *Jami'u't-tawarikh*, II: 313.

confused Qubilai-era copyist then consulted this other Mongolian chronicle of Ögedei's reign, where he found the two horse year incidents filed under Ögedei's reign. He thus used this text to "correct" the SHM. As a result a notice that was originally about Tangghud helping/replacing Sartaq Qorchi became one about Yisüder Qorchi helping/replacing Jalayirtai Qorchi.

Some corroboration of this scenario can be found in the SHM's statement that Yisüder was ordered to dwell among the Jurchen and Koreans as a *tammachi* (a permanent garrison force of diverse, largely non-Mongol, troops). In fact only one commander in the Korean area is mentioned elsewhere as commander of a *tamma* unit, and that is Tangghud Ba'atur.<sup>148</sup> Rashîd al-Dîn dates the dispatch of this *tammachi* army against Puxian Wannu's 蒲鮮萬奴 remnant Jurchen kingdom and the Koreans to the Chinggis-Ögedei interregnum. That is, he puts it at the same time as the dispatch of Chormaqan as *tammachi* to the Middle East, which is also mentioned in SHM §274.<sup>149</sup> The original commander Sartaq died in battle in 1232 and was officially replaced by Tangghud in 1235. It is, then, presumably Tangghud whom the original text of the SHM had being ordered to assist Sartaq and stay as *tammachi* in the land of the Jurchen and Korea. Thus a plausible scenario can be hypothesized in which the passage about Korea in the SHM referred originally not to the Möngke-era campaigns at all, but rather to the first dispatch of *tammachis* to Korea under Ögedei. This hypothesis gives us a possible solution, at least, of the major difficulty with the 1252 date and a unitary text.

Given this fixing of the date of the SHM, a firm foundation for the task of understanding the political and historiographical context of this work is laid. The SHM appears in this light as a manifesto of a nativist revival under Möngke's reign, one that embraced the cult of Chinggis Qan with new fervor, turned back to the Mongol traditions, and rejected the two previous khans' patronage of Kitan and Turkic Christian advisors. It also appears as the beginning of a broader wave of history writing in the empire. If this 1252 dating is correct, then (as Charles Melville pointed out in his comments on

148. Rashîd al-Dîn, *Successors of Genghis Khan*, 32–33; Tangghud is also called Ba'atur in Song Lian, *Yuan shi* 154/3628.

149. Cf. Matsuda, "On the Ho-nan Mongol Army," 40. Rashîd al-Dîn is in error when he treats Tangghud's initial dispatch in 1228 against the Jurchen and Koreans as one event with the later dispatch of the princes Alchidai and Güyüg's to finish off Wannu's Jurchen kingdom in 1233. The East Asian sources put the latter expedition in 1233; see Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, 2/32, 38, 121/2979; cf. Henthorn, *Korea: The Mongol Invasions*, 102).

an earlier version of this paper) the SHM was being composed at Ködö'e Aral only a few months before the Persian official 'Alâ al-Dîn 'Atâ-Malik Juvainî was being commissioned in Qara-Qorum to write a history of Môngke Qa'an's coronation and the rise of the Mongol empire.<sup>150</sup> These works, so different in their style, assumptions, and audience give us the earliest known versions of many events in Chinggis Qan's life: the broken marriage alliance with Ong Qan, the warning of Badai and Kishiliq, the retreat to Baljuna, and the death of Teb-Tenggeri. Up until that time, we hear of the wise sayings of the imperial family being recorded by court scribes, but not of connected narrative histories. In East Asia, at least, we know the SHM was soon followed by a plethora of biographic and annalistic histories in Mongolian, few of which have survived, but many of which can be partially reconstructed.<sup>151</sup> It would be beyond the scope of this paper to develop the point at length, but the 1250s seem to have formed the cusp at which the Mongolian historical narratives, previously preserved orally as stories explaining well-known judgments, wise sayings, or verses, were first reduced to writing. It will be the task of the future to explore more deeply the SHM's position within this evolving historical context of the Mongol empire.

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150. Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, 4–5, 9–10; cf. pp. xxv–xxvii.

151. See Hung, "Transmission of the Book," 471ff., and Ledyard, "Mongol Campaigns in Korea." The present author is completing a study of the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* and other sources that attempts to reconstruct in outline this post-SHM Mongolian-language historiography.

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