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In this article, we would like to pose a question about the role of the Bargujin-oron tribes in the history of the Oirats, especially in light of the fact that the Oirats' increase in population and regional importance paralleled the subdivision of the Bargujin ethnoses. We argue that these processes were directly interconnected and that it is possible to talk not only about the entry of some of the Khori-Tumats, Tulas, and Barguts into the Oirat but also about the influence of the Bargujin tribes on the early Oirats and, possibly, on the formation of the secondary Oirat entity—the union of those who shared the Oirat name during the Mongolian empire.

Key words: Bargujin-tokum, Oirats, Alan-Goa, Khori-Tumat, Genghis Khan

1. Introduction

Written sources from the earliest period of the Mongolian empire do not mention Dzungar as a particular ethno-cultural territory or political entity. Records on the Oirats are very rare, demonstrating the group's insignificance in the Mongolian history of the time. That had changed less than a century later, however: the Oirats' political, cultural, and military importance increased steadily until the Manchurian invasion.

The opposite occurred in the vast region of Bargujin-oron (or Bargujin-tokum), which bordered Kyrgyz in the west and the Onon Mongols in the east. As early as the 9th and 10th centuries, Alan-Goa of Khori-Tumat and her descendants from the area played a key role in forming the Nirun entity among the Mongols of the Onon-Kerulen interfluve. The Bargut

tribe that lent its name to other tribes in the region had long-standing matrimonial relations with Genghis Khan's ancestors and helped them in struggles against their enemies. During the internecine wars, the tribes of Bargujin-oron accepted the Merkits and Tayichiuds as political refugees, though they never took part in the wars of the 12th and early 13th centuries. The involvement of the Bargujin tribes in the empire's affairs was not a simple matter; by its end, the very notion of Bargujin as a country had gradually disappeared, while the region's military-political unions had been inexorably weakened.

In this article, we would like to pose a question about the role of the Bargujin-oron tribes in the history of the Oirats, especially in light of the fact that the Oirats' increase in population and regional importance paralleled the subdivision of the Bargujin ethnoses. We argue that these processes were directly interconnected and that it is possible to talk not only about the entry of some of the Khori-Tumats, Tulas, and Barguts into the Oirat but also about the influence of the Bargujin tribes on the early Oirats and, possibly, on the formation of the secondary Oirat entity—the union of those who shared the Oirat name during the Mongolian empire.

2. The Oirats before the formation of the Mongolian Empire

The Oirats appear on the historical stage of Central Asia after the collapse of the Mongolian empire as one of the region's leading military-political powers. In the period before the formation of the empire—and later, too, in the written sources of the 13th century—the Oirats are mentioned only in connection with events that took place after the rivalry between Genghis Khan and the Naimans had begun. Earlier history is silent on the Oirats, the exception being the Dorbet tribe (Durban in *A Compendium of Chronicles*), which appears in various stories from the time of Genghis Khan's ancestors. However, the Dorbets were not at that time associated with the Oirats, since, in all cases but one, the two ethnonyms were unrelated. Rashid-al-Din, describing the forces of Tayan khan of the Naiman, lists among others "Kutuka-beki, the king of the Oirats, of the Durban tribe" (Rashid-ad-Din 1952: 138). This can be understood to mean either that the Oirat dynasty had Dorbet roots or that the Oirats were a branch of the Dorbet. It is evident in any case that the other references to the Dorbets in *A Compendium of Chronicles* and *The Secret History of the Mongols* relate to the Onon-Kerulen Mongol tribe, who lived separately from the Oirats of Khuduga-beki.

The Oirats of before 1207 and a little bit later were a small military-political unit that did not stand out among the other ethnic groups of the northern frontier of the Mongolian world. Rashid-al-Din's description of the imperial army speaks to their numbers: "There were four thousand of them (proper) but they are not known in detail. Their emir and ruler was Kutuka-beki" (Rashid-ad-Din 1952: 269). Four thousand warriors is not a significant unit by 13th-century standards, but we must remember that we are talking about the Oirats after 1207, and warriors from other regional tribes could be included in this number. Though Rashid-al-Din generally speaks of the Oirats with admiration, he also writes about the weakness of the early Oirats (those prior to 1208): "Suddenly, on the way, the patrol watch and avant-garde of the army came across the Oirat tribe ruled by Kutuka-beki. Since this tribe did not have strength or power (sufficient) for a war and resistance, it submitted and showed the way to the army of Genghis Khan, and suddenly led it to Toktai-beki, the ruler of the Merkits, and Kushluk-khan,

a son of Tayan-khan" (Rashid-al-Din 1952: 152). In § 239 of *The Secret History of the Mongols*, it is written that the Oirats were the first to express loyalty to Jochi during his expedition to the Forest peoples in 1207. Moreover, the Oirats did not later oppose the Mongols during the stubborn resistance of the Tumats and Kyrgyz.

The Oirats' participation in the military confrontation on the steppe—during the battle of Koiten on the side of Jamukha's coalition in 1201 and in the battle of Nakhu-kun in 1204—can obviously be explained by their dependency on the Naiman. Three mentions of the Oirats in contemporary sources occur in connection with the military campaigns against the Naimans (in 1201, 1204, and 1208). Some of the Naimans, headed by Buyuruk-khan, took a direct part in Jamukha's coalition. During the battle of Koiten, Buyuruk and Khuduga of the Oirat jointly performed a storm-making rite. In the 1204 battle of Nakhu-kun, Oirats fought along with other tribes under the command of another Naiman ruler, Tayan khan.

3. Bargujin ethnonyms in the composition of the Oirats

Early sources on the history of the Mongols indicate four "tribes" united by the name "Bargut" living on the vast territory of Bargujin-oron. They are the Bargut, Tulas, Khori, and Tumat. It is said that the "Tumats ... were an extremely militant tribe and army" and that "this tribe made up a separate army and was militant and rebellious." It was most likely not a real tribe but rather a military organization of the Bargujin tribes, the Khori and Barguts (Mongolian sources sometimes call the Tumats "Khori Tumed" or "Bargujin Tumed").

Accoring to *A Compendium of Chronicles*, the Oirats were also in Bargujin-tokum, where the Bulagachins and Keremuchins lived as well, whereas the Oin-Uryankha tribe "was near these borders" (Rashid-al-Din 1952: 121). Among them, the Khori-Tumats (or Tumats) were a big enough formation to resist Genghis Khan's army. Scholars usually date the inclusion of the Bargujin tribes in the Oirats from the moment of the Tumats' defeat in 1217. S. A. Kozin writes that "Khudakha-beki took possession of a Khori-Tumat kingdom in the person of his wife, and queen of the Khori-Tumats who was granted to him" (Kozin 1938: 23).

A number of Mongolian and especially Oirat sources indicate a Bargu-Buryat tumen or Bargu tumen as part of the Oirats. For instance, the *Shara Tuuzhi* includes a Bargu tumen in the Oirat union (*Shara Tuuzhi* 2006: 70), and the *Erdeniin Tobchi* uses the double name *Oirad Buriyad* (Sagan Secen: 109).

In fact, we find among the Oirats families such as Bargu and Buryat, families with names consonant with the Buryat ethnonym "Bulagad" ("Bulgat"), four of the five ethnonyms of the families of an elder (Sharaldai) group of the Khori, and one ethnonym from the list of a younger Khori group, Bodonguud (Budanguud). Recall that the elder Khori group consists of the Galzut (Galzuud), Hoasai (or Ukhaasai), Kubdut (Khubduud), Sharaid, and Guchit families.

Within the Bait (Bayad), there are such families as Galzad, Sharaid, Bargamuud, Barga, Buldagar, and Bulgad; within the Dorbet, there are Sharaid, Buldagar, Butanguud, Barga, and Bargad; within the Miangat, there is Barga; within the Olët, there are Barguud, Khara Barguud, and Shara Barguud; and within the Khotogoit, there is Barga (Ochir 1993: 17, 25, 37, 44). The Barga, Buryat, Khalzat, Sharaid, and Tumet families can be found with the Altai (Mongolian) Uryankha (Ochir 1993: 66). The Uryankha are not connected to the

Oirats by origin, but due to territorial proximity and sometimes to political alliances, the two groups have many identical clans In the 12th century, the Oin-Uryankha tribe lived between or near four of them, the Barguts not among them.

Among the Kalmyks, there are the Kubut, Sharad, Guchad, Mu-Khorin, and Alangosut families. G. O. Avlyaev argues that they are related to the Khori-Tumats by origin (Avlyaev 2002: 128, 133). The first three ethnonyms are Kalmyk variants of "Buryat Kubdut," "Sharaid," and "Guchid." The scholar interprets the term "Mu-Korin" as "bad Khori" and derives the name "Alangosud" from "Alan-goa." There is some doubt concerning these two interpretations, but they are interesting and cannot be ignored.

Finally, we should mention the ethnonyms meaning "piebald horse." There is a Bomad-nud group including Kalmyks, the name of which G. O. Avlyaev interprets as a Chinese loan translation of the ethnonym *Alag*, meaning "piebald horses" (Avlyaev 2002: 206). The Alagchuud clan is a part of the Mongolian Torguts (Ochir 1993: 52). Early medieval Chinese sources mention a *Boma* ("Chinese piebald horse") people bordering the Kyrgyz who spoke a language that the latter could not understand. The people's auto-ethnonym the Chinese transcribed as *yelochzhe*, which can be identified as the Mongolian *alagchin* ("piebaldish"). *A Compendium of Chronicles* contains a story about an area in the Lower Angara where all horses are piebald and all tableware and tools are made of silver. Rashid-al-Din writes that the "names of this area are Alafhin, Adutan, Mangu, and Balaurnan" (Rashid-al-Din 1952: 102). It is evident that these four words are not four names for the area but, rather, a rhyming nickname in Mongolian: *Alagchin aduutan mungen buluurtan*, or "those who have piebald horses and silver bulurs [tall, narrow vessels for churning butter]." Rashid-al-Din took this poetic name to be four separate names and transcribed the last two words with hard vowels instead of the original Mongolian soft vowels (as is typical in *A Compendium of Chronicles*).

The ancient Alagchins were obviously a Mongolian-speaking people who, by the 12th century, had become close to the nearby Bargujin tribes. The Alagchins were probably a part of the Khori-Tumats or Tulas but known to other peoples by a different name.

Besides the ethnonyms listed above, the clans recorded among the Oirats include the Khariad (with Khotogoits) (Ochir 1993: 77) and Sharanuud (with Dorbets, Torguts, and Khoshuts (Ochir 1993: 25, 52, 86). Contemporary Mongolian Khariads consider themselves Buryat in origin, and a family with the same name also exists among the Buryats. The Sharanuud clan is widely represented among the western Buryats and is also present among the Barguts; however, the question of its origin has not been fully studied. The Boronuud kin is often mentioned in connection with Dorbets and Baits and is also known in Buryatia, as will be explained below.

As for the Barga/Bargut subdivisions, it makes sense to look at the family composition of the contemporary "Old" Barguts (khuuchin Barga) of Khulun-Buir, comprising the Chivchin, Oriyogon, Sharanuud, Kharanuud, Baizhintal, Khashnuud, Tulgachin, Uriankhai, Zhalkhan, Khurlaad, Buleenguud, Khagshuud, Uliad, Khavchid, Khövchir, Eregen, and Bulgachin (Өlzii 1990: 8). As we can see, there are ethnic groups among the Barga that previously comprised separate tribes territorially or politically close to the Barguts. Besides the Uriankha, we can mention the Kurlaut (Khurlaad) tribe, which is described in *A Compendium of Chronicles* this way: "This tribe and the Kungirat, Eljigin and Bargut tribes are close

and connected to each other; they share the same tamga; they follow kinship requirements, and keep between themselves [the taking of] sons- and daughters-in-law" (Rashid-al-Din 1952: 117). Almost the same can be said of the Kharanuud clan; in the 12th and 13th centuries, the Karanuts were recorded as being part of the Khungirat union, which was allied with the Barguts.

There are other coincidences as well. For instance, there is a Shimshigid clan among the Baits (corresponding with Chivchin) and there are Khavchuud and Kharanuud clans among the Torguts (corresponding with Khavchid and Kharanuud among the "old" Baruts) (Ochir 1993: 17, 52). Not all of these subdivisions were originally Bargut, but, as far as the Chivchins and Khavchids are concerned, we can be quite sure that they belonged to the indigenous Bargu. The ethnonym "Chivchin" is sometimes used to define all "old" Barguts, whereas the word *khavchin* (*Buryat khavshan*) means "seal hunter" and can therefore originate nowhere but on the Baikal shores, where the ancestors of the Barguts lived.

This is far from a full list of ethnonyms related to the Bargujin-oron population that found themselves among the Oirat subdivisions after 1217. Four of the elder groups (and probably the most ancient group) and only one younger group of Khori ethnonyms listed here can be found among the Oirats. The absence of the ethnonym *Khoasai*, the second clan by seniority among the Khori Buryats, is noteworthy and can be explained by the late entry of this otok into the Khori. Beginning with G. N. Rumyantsev, scholars have connected its origin with the Merkit tribe the Khoas (Rumyantsev 1962: 242). The Merkits proper and subdivisions with names consonant or concurrent with the meaning of "Khoas" are present among the Oirats, such as the Kho-Merkit and Khoonut.

An important fact that should be taken into account when analyzing the list of ethnonyms is that variants of the term *bulga* with different suffixes may not signify a concrete ethnic group. Moreover, this group need not necessarily have been comprised of branches of the Buryat Bulagats. In fact, the Turkic word *bulγa* in 13th-century Mongolian meant "rebellious." In §241 of *The Secret History of the Mongols* bulγa irgen is a description of the Khori-Tumats as "rebellious people." Known sources before *A Compendium of Chronicles* (at the start of the 14th century) do not mention any other Bulgachins or Bulgads. It is thus possible that the "rebels" nickname was first assigned to the Tumats; perhaps that is why there are Bulgachins, Bulgadars, and Bulgats among the Oirats but no Tumats. In general, all Tumat ethnonyms can be found beyond the Oirat world; they are not known among the Buryats, though this is obviously for different reasons.

The materials on the separate subdivisions hint at how many Bargujin expatriates were incorporated into the Oirats. The Kubut (Kubuud) clan consisted of 3,000 nomad tents (Avlyaev 2002: 167). According to I. Bichurin's data, the Galzuts in the Dzungar Khanate included 4,000 nomad tents. There were also 3,000 nomad tents of the Chotolok generation, the ethnonym that we identify with the Buryat Shosholok (Bichurin 1991). The Buryat groups of Khori, Khongodor, and Shosholok consider themselves related (*khori mongol udkhatai*), all being the offspring of a heavenly goddess in the form of a swan.

4. The Buryat Dzungars

Here we want to pose a question about the origin and ethnic history of a group of Buryat clans

sharing the name "Dzungars" or "Olëts" ("Öölöd"). For a long time, they were considered splinters of the Oirats who found themselves in Buryatia after the dissolution of the Mongolian empire. However, the Buryat materials paint a completely different picture. In historical legends, the formula *Sain khaanai samarkhadan Boshogto khaanai buhalkhadan*, which means "at the time of Sain khan's turmoil, at the time of Boshogto khan's rebellion," is sometimes used. Scholars usually date this to the war between the Oirats and Zasagtu khan. We do not reject the possibility that separate groups of nomads arrived in Buryatia during this war and introduced this formula to Buryat folklore. The Buryats know a different variant of it, however: *Shenges shelgeree*, *Boshogto buhalaa* or *Shengesei shenzhekheden*, *Boshogtyn buhalkhadan* (Baldaev 1970: 293, 317). In the descriptions of that time, the following motifs can be traced: "terrible war, they would kill the whole clan and tribe," "terrible time, enemies were destroying everything," "everyone took up arms, even women," and "it was a terrible war, hunger was approaching, people would die by the thousands, no one was left to bury the dead" (Baldaev 1970: 291, 293, 317).

Detailed descriptions of fierce warfare and constant mentions of battles occur almost exclusively in the legends and ritual poetry of the western Khori-Buryats, the Galzuuts and Segenut tribe. Other clans, believing that the time of *buhaalgan* is the starting point for their history in Buryatia, do not know such details. In our opinion, the western Khori kept the memory of the 1217 Khori-Tumat rebellion and of Genghis Khan's subsequent military campaigns against them. Besides, several Buryat clans that fled the Russians from Bratsk in the 17th century (the Ashabagats first) actually found themselves caught in a war between Galdan Boshogtu of the Oirat and Zasagtu khan of the Khalkha. During that war, some of the Buryats were able to return to their motherland, where a mixture of folkloric themes and a poetic formula appeared to unify two different epochs—that of Genghis Khan and that of Galdan Boshogtu. However, the mythical land of Dzungar, whence the conglomeration of Buryat kins came, was not included in this mode of expression.

For example, this was recorded at the turn of the 20th century: "In the old times from the southern side of Baikal from the Zungar area, people of Segenut bone had come to the northern side of Baikal" (Khangalov 2004: 278). A legend first published in 1890 says, "The Elet (Öölöd) or Segenut tribe lived on the southern side of Baikal. They had killed their commander and, being afraid of punishment, went down the Selenga and crossed Baikal" (Khangalov 2004: 78). In 1935, another folklorist recorded the following variant: "Segenuts lived on the southern side of Baikal. They killed their commander for his ill treatment of them, crossed Baikal on ice, and settled together with Ekhirits and Bulagats" (Baldaev 1970: 316). Thus, in the oldest versions, Dzungar, as the ancestral home of the Segenuts, is situated somewhere in the Selenga valley or, at least, southeast of Baikal, rather than where the Dzungar khanate would later be.

The Segenut tribe had another name among the Buryats—the Öölöd. In a number of legends, this tribe is considered a more ancient population of the Upper Lena than the Ekhirits [Baldaev, p. 310, 317]; in other variants, however, it is said that the Segenuts settled between the Ekhirits and Bulagats, whom they started to attack. In any case, the Segenuts were divided into several branches: Segenut, Munkhaliud (Munkhalyut or Mankhalyut), Ikinad, Khaital, Zuun Gar, and Baruun Gar. Sometimes the Bukhed, Kharanuud, Sharanuud, and Boronuud clans are added to this list (Baldaev 1970: 326). Meanwhile, the contemporary Segenuts are

just a clan originating from an ancient tribe of the same name that was almost annihilated by the Bulagats and Ekhirits (Khangalov 2004: 78; Baldaev1970: 316).

When comparing the ethnonyms of the branches of the ancient Segenuts with the Oirats', we discover (along with such coincidences as Ölööd, Zuun Gar, Sharanuud, Kharanuud, and Boronuud) the term *Munkhaliud*. This looks like a Buryat ethnonym consisting of *mun* and *khaliud*, the second part meaning "otters" (from the Buryat *khaliun*, "otter"). The term *mun* is difficult to interpret, though it goes back etymologically to the Buryat word *bun*, which is sometimes paired with *sen(g)*, meaning "hoarfrost" or "rime." The point is that all these families considered themselves the descendants of Ayu-khan's daughter and a god called Segeen Sebdeg Tengri (Khangalov 2004: 279; Baldaev 1970: 324). The word *sebdeg* means "frozen" and is similar to *sen(g)* ("hoarfrost" or "rime"). We believe that a clan that branched off from the Segenuts was originally called *Sen(g) bun khaliud* but that the first word gradually disappeared while the second underwent the common b-m exchange in the initial position. Among the Khotogoits is the Khaliuchin clan, and the Khaliud was also recorded in Ordos (Chuluun 2006: 53). Thus, the connection of the Segenut group with the Oirats assumes a more concrete outline.

A peculiarity of Buryat legends about the Dzungars (*zuun gar* means "left hand") is the motif of the Baruun *gar kin*, or "right hand." One record says, "One Buryat of the Segenut bone had twins who were given names: a boy who grew up on the right hand will be Barungar, and the one who grew up on the left hand will be Zungar. The Barungar bone lives overseas, and the descendants of Zungar are today's Zungar Buryats. Zungar Buryats came from the southern side of the sea" (Khangalov 2004: 281). A similar story describes the same twins, describing the Barungar kin as living now in the Nizheudinsk uyezd district, heavily Russified and suffering from a scarcity of population (Baldaev 1970: 326). Ethnographic material covering various years corroborates this information. The Barungar were recorded with the Nizhneudinsk Buryats in 1909 (Khangalov 1959: 46), in 1960, and in 1988 and 1990 (Sydenova 2000: 101).

Thus, the Buryat system of naming for the right and left "hands" in Ethnic Onomastics is not contradictory, in contrast with the strange appearance of the term *dzungar* among the Oirats. Scholars have been puzzled by the absence of the ethnonym *Barungar* in the ethnic sector where the Oirat Dzungars became famous and gave their name to the entire empire (Ekeev 2006: 139). At the same time, both terms occur among the Buryats exclusively as ethnic names.

5. The two "lost" clans of the Khori Buryats

In the old records of Buryat genealogies and in their chronicles and folklore, it is said that they originally had 13 clans, but that two were "lost" during the large-scale migrations of the Khori people. It is sometimes mentioned that the two younger sons of Khoridai (the forefather of the Khori) "died when children." A number of sources provide this information in detail.

A Chronicle by Sh.-N. Khobituev names these sons and the clans they founded: Khaidul and Chinnud. In Mongolian, these names were written as *qayidul* and *cingnüd*. Sh.-N. Khobituev also writes that the two families "moved to the other side of Baikal" and

joined the Buryats there, having in mind the western (or northern in the Buryat understanding) side and the western Buryats (*Buryadai tuukhe besheguud*, p. 95). There are actually Khaital and Segenut clans there who can be identified as those referenced by the author of the *Chronicle*. This identification cannot be considered a later addition by Sh.-N. Khobituev; he merely recorded and passed on existing information. The ethnonyms in his record were given in their old forms, which had not been used by the Buryats for a long time.

A contemporary pronunciation of *khaital* cannot turn into *qayidul*, or s*egenut* into *cingnüd*. In the latter case, we can allow the incidental dropping of a vowel after *g*, but this sound had probably not been present before.

In one version of this information, the names of the two clans are given as *Khogodol* and *Sorgod* (Rumyantsev 1962: 177). Here we see "Khogodol" instead of "Khaital," perhaps a variant of an even older pronunciation. The most interesting aspect of this is the exchange of the Segenut for the Sorgod.

According to A. Ochir, some written sources use *Tsorgos* instead of *Tsoros* (or *Choros*) (Ochir 1996: 6). On this basis and also taking into account the legend about the Choros clan who gave Dzungar its ruling dynasty, the author hypothesizes that the term "Tsorgos" was an ancient form of the later "Choros." When comparing this version with the Buryat material, we are faced with the fact that the ethnonym "Sorgod" is used as a synonym for "Segenut," while the latter in turn is identified by the Western Buryats with the Ölööd. A Buryat Sorgod is in fact the same as a Tsorgos because the plural indicator "–s" has been lost in Buryat, and the "ts" and "ch" sounds at the beginning and in the middle of words are rendered "s" or "sh."

Where did the mention of Sorgod/Choros clan come from in the Buryat genealogies? This is a very complicated issue that is impossible to study without taking into consideration the complexity of the data on Segenuts and the tribes of Bargujin-oron. Without taking into account the Buryat materials, the occurrence of "Sorgod" seems like an accident. Taking into account the layers of topics related to Buryat Dzungar and Segenuts-Olëts, however, the picture becomes clearer: the appearance of another "Oirat" ethnonym with the Buryats does not seem a mere accident.

The Segenuts are not mentioned by their contemporary name in 13th- and 14th-century sources, but no Ölööd ethnonym is mentioned there either. Were the Segenuts not part of the Khori-Tumats? This possibility comes to mind after encountering the record of Sh.-N. Khobituev. Only the absence of direct proof in the Segenuts' own texts suggests otherwise.

There is one more probable scenario. In the list of Bargujin tribes given in *A Compendium of Chronicles*, there is a tribe called "Tulas." Given that soft vowels are not reproduced in this source, we can suggest that the name of the tribe has been distorted. In *The Secret History of the Mongols*, it is reproduced correctly as *Töölös*. It may well have been that the Steppe Mongols referred to the Segenuts in that way. This probably was not an autoethnonym but rather a nickname or a rare form of an ethnonym used not by the Bargujin tribes proper but by their neighbors—the Mongols or the Turks. It is difficult at this stage to say anything definite on the matter. The identification of the Töölös with the Segenuts explains the absence in sources of both the Segenuts as an ethnonym and of the ethnonym "Ölööd," which, as shown, was used to refer to the Segenuts.

On the other hand, the terms "Töölös" and "Ögüled" are very close. In *The Secret His-*

tory of the Mongols, everything is transcribed into Chinese hieroglyphs, but in the Classical Mongolian script, "Töölös" could have been written as "Tögüles," which is even closer to "Ögüled." The difference lies in the plural suffix and in the absence of an initial consonant in the second term. We think that the study of the relations between the Tögüles and the Ögüled from the linguistic point of view is worth pursuing.

6. Bargujin-oron in the migration epoch

A written masterpiece of the Khori Buryats, *A Novel of the Balzhin Princess*, tells of a nine-month eastward migration undertaken by their ancestors until they reached a great ocean (Buryadai Tuukhe Besheguud 1992: 222). Although this story dates to the time of the Solongut beile Buubei (to the late Middle Ages) and is set in Manchuria, the long duration of the march implies that its starting point was Bargujin-oron. This exodus must have been caused by extraordinary circumstances. Could the cause have been the very same terrible war during which "they killed the whole tribe"?

The Western Buryats of the Bulagat and Ekhirit tribes also remember that epoch when the territory to the west (or, in Buryat tradition, the north) of Baikal became desolate. Their legends sometimes tell it this way: "People who lived to the north of Baikal for an unknown reason all moved to the southern side, to Mongolia" (Khangalov 2004: 72). Sometimes, the description of the exodus is narrowed to the scale of one family: one old man had seven sons, famous baturs, who raided their neighbors all over northern Mongolia but suffered from the despotism of their father. The old man would punish them for the smallest faults using Mongolian methods, such as the stocks. Once, the brothers took advantage of their father's absence to gather all their herds and flocks and move to the opposite side of Baikal (Baldaev 1970: 33).

The biggest part of this topic most probably applies to the history of the Khori-Tumat eastward migration in the 13th century. However, separate clans of the Khori and Segenuts living in enclaves among the contemporary western Buryats narrate stories of their flight to their current residence from the territories of Tuva, the Yenissei, and Altai.

The Nizhneudinsk Buryats have a legend according to which their ancestors came there from Mongolia, where they used to serve in Genghis Khan's army. Because they did not wish to perish in battle, they left and found asylum in the area of contemporary Nizhneudinsk. Their route is indicated by a trail via the Western Sayan from the side of Tuva, a 5- to 6-day ride (Mikhailov 2000: 23). This group of Buryats includes clans of Khori origin, the Sharaid and Burkhan Shubuun, as well as the Segenut clan of Barungar. The Ikinat kin in Unga narrate the following about their history: "Ikinat was Segenut's nephew. They came from the river Khem [Yenissei] during some wars. Once their kin were numerous and strong. But in constant wars, under the attacks of a mighty people, and due to the resistance of tribes and clans they met on their way, they became weak" (Baldaev 1970: 320). Here is an example of the Altai motif: "The Buryats of the Khaital kin lived together with the Buryats of the Segen kin…they consider themselves expatriated from the Altai. There were wars in their motherland; that is why the people of the Khaital kin left their motherland and came to the river Lena" (Baldaev 1970: 321).

Thus, on the one hand, historical legends offer commentary on the exodus from the territory of western Buryatia to the east or southeast. On the other hand, we find a complex of themes on the opposite movement—to the territory of western Buryatia. Here we see the motifs of two migrations—from the southeast of Baikal to the contemporary Irkutsk region and from the southwest or west (from the Altai, Tuva, or Yenissei). These exodus themes are not dated, and there are no details on the events, which can be explained by the absence of descendants of the participants among the bearers of western Buryat folklore. The current descendants are of a different ethnic group, the eastern Khori in the Republic of Buryatia, Zabaikalsky Krai, Mongolia, and China.

Descriptions of the migrations to the territory of western Buryatia from the east (or southeast) are not dated either, though the events can be assumed to have taken place no later than the 12th century and probably even earlier. In these legends, the Segenuts sometimes come to the Lena earlier than the Ekhirits or Bulagats.

The theme of flight from war in the southwest date back to the time of Genghis Khan, the years of Galdan Boshogtu's conflict with the Khalkha, or the years of the fall of the Dzungar Khanate (at the time of the Manchurian ruler Enkhe Amgalan). In our opinion, the right era would be that of the Mongols' military campaigns against the Khori-Tumats and other Bargujin peoples because all the bearers of folklore about migrations from the Altai, Tuva, Yenissei, and southeast of Baikal speak common Buryat tongues with no trace of the Oirat dialects. The period of Galdan's wars or the Manchurian marches was not remote, but the migrants, though in some cases quite numerous, did not adopt anything that was specifically Oirat.

We tend to connect the presence in Buryat folklore of the Altai, Tuva, and Yenissei motifs with the settlement of the Khori-Tumats before the Mongolian invasion. In our opinion, the tribes in the western part of Bargujin-oron and the Oirats of the 12th century were nominally under the political control of the Naimans. There are many indirect data showing a comprehensive Naiman influence on the Bargujin tribes. After the Naimans defeated the Kyrgyz during the rule of Eniat khan (the father of Buyuruk and Tayan), they had to gather the forces necessary to control the remote Kyrgyz territories on the Yenissei and in Tuva. The Bargujin tribes, as neighbors and enemies of the Kyrgyz, were probably attracted by the Naimans for this purpose. Thus, the Tumats and Segenuts could reach the Yenissei as the Naimans' allies. That is why *A Compendium of Chronicles* mentions that the Tumats lived not only in Bargujin-oron but also "within the limits of the Kyrgyz country." These were probably Naiman garrisons made up of the Bargujin expatriates. Separate groups of Tumats and Tulas (or Segenuts to us) could have gone as part of the Naiman forces as far as the Altai. Tumat and Töölös clans can still be found in the mountainous Altai, together with the Maiman clan. These separate units of Tumats and Segenuts were apparently attacked by Mongolian forces first during the Naimans' defeat and again in 1217–1218 during the rebellion of the Tumats and allied Kyrgyz. Some of them succeeded in cutting their way through to join their kinsmen on the Angara, the Upper Lena, and the island of Olkhon.

We think that the resistance of the Khori-Tumats and other northern peoples continued for decades after 1218 and apparently ended as late as the war between Khubilai and Arig-Buga. There is much indirect evidence of this theory in written documents, archeological materials, and folklore. During internecine wars in the empire, tribes and political alliances of Bargujin-

oron would decide in favor of this or that claimant.

Some chose Khubilai and undertook a long march across Baikal and through the mountains and rivers of Southeastern Siberia in the direction of Manchuria and the Pacific Ocean to meet the armies of the future founder of the Yuan empire. There, they were to take part in a sea march to Japan, in the Mongolian *Inzhi* garrisons in Korea, and in palace coups d'etat during the reign of Togon Temur, then spend two centuries in the feudal possessions of the Khaisi-Khulun alliance in Manchuria. Others supported Arig-Buga and thereby connected their destiny to that of the Oirats. Nevertheless, all remembered their ancestral home near Baikal.

Thousands of these wanderers left Dzungar and Manchuria almost simultaneously at the turn of the 17th century and moved to their ancient land. There, on the shores of Baikal, the two streams of travelers met again and formed the contemporary Buryat ethnoses of Khongodors, Shosholoks, and Khori that make up more than half of the Buryat nation. As the narrators and authors of the Buryat chronicles admit, "a bigger part of our people remained in a strange land—and yet, for almost 400 years of life apart from each other, both branches and those who stayed at Baikal preserved their identities and the major features of their language.

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