

ISSN: 1814-6961 (print)
ISSN: 2788-9718 (online)

Отан тарихы

Отечественная история

History of the Homeland

Үш айда бір рет шығатын ғылыми журнал
2025. № 28 (3)

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Published in the Kazakhstan
Otan tarikhy
Has been issued as a journal
since 1998
ISSN: 1814-6961 (Print)
ISSN: 2788-9718 (Online)
2025. Vol. 28. Is. 3. Pp. 563-572
Journal homepage:
<https://otan.history.iie.kz>



FTAXP / MPHTI / IRSTI 03.20

https://doi.org/10.51943/2788-9718_2025_28_3_563-572

ON THE HISTORY OF THE TRANSLATION OF "THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS" BY S.A. KOZIN

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Abstract. *Introduction.* The material accumulated in recent years by the historical science of Kazakhstan allows us to consider the significance of the manuscript of the "Secret History of the Mongols", translated by S.A. Kozin, from a new perspective. *Objective and Tasks.* To explore the history of S.A. Kozin's translation of this important source, which still contains many mysteries about the history of the empire of Genghis Khan, in particular the demographic composition and political history. *Materials and methods.* To study this topic, the author used the published text of the "Secret History of the Mongols" translated by S.A. Kozin in 1941, as well as materials from the archives of the Institute of Oriental Studies. To provide an objective coverage of the topic, the author used methods of comparative analysis of texts, interpretation and comparison of documents. The method of event reconstruction and the method of comparing existing literature from various authors were also used. *Results.* As an in-depth analysis of the text shows, the manuscript of the «Secret History of the Mongols» was compiled with extensive use of vocabulary not only from the ancient Manchurian (Oirat), Chinese, but also Turkic languages.

Keywords: The Secret History of the Mongols, Chinese, Mongolian, Turkic languages, translations, P. Kafarov, A.N. Samoylovich, S.A. Kozin, Stalinist repressions, new findings

For citation: Ayagan B.G. On the history of the translation of "The secret history of the mongols" by S.A. Kozin // Otan tarikhy. 2025. Vol. 28. No. 3. Pp. 563-572. [in Eng.].

DOI: [10.51943/2788-9718_2025_28_3_563-572](https://doi.org/10.51943/2788-9718_2025_28_3_563-572)

С.А. КОЗИННИҢ «МОҢҒОЛДЫҢ ҚҰПИЯ ШЕЖІРЕСІН» АУДАРУ ТАРИХЫ ТУРАЛЫ

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Аңдатпа. *Kіріспе.* Соңғы жылдары Қазақстанның тарих ғылымымен жинақталған материал С.А. Козин аударған «Моңғолдың құпия тарихы» қолжазбасының маңызын жаңа тұрғыдан қарауға мүмкіндік береді. *Мақсаттар мен міндеттер.* С.А. Козиннің Шыңғысхан империясының тарихы, атап айтқанда демографиялық құрамы мен саяси тарихы туралы әлі де көптеген құпияларды сақтайтын осы маңызды дереккөздің аударма тарихын зерттеу. *Материалдар мен әдістер.* Осы тақырыпты зерттеу үшін автор С.А. Козиннің 1941 жылғы аудармасында жарияланған «Моңғолдардың құпия ертегісі» мәтінін, сондай-ақ шығыстану институтының мұрағат материалдарын пайдаланған. Тақырыпты объективті жария ету үшін автор мәтіндерді салыстырмалы талдау, құжаттарды түсіндіру және салыстыру әдістерін пайдаланған. Сондай-ақ оқиғаны қайта құру әдісі және түрлі авторлардың қолда бар әдебиеттерін салыстыру әдісі қолданылды. *Қорытындылар.* Дегенмен аударма 1930–1940-жылдары И.В. Сталинмен оның жақтаушыларының тарих пен филология ғылымына саяси ықпалын жасаған кезінде орындалды.

Түйін сөздер: Моңғолдың құпия тарихы, ортағасыр қытай, моңғол, түркі тілдері, аудармалар, П. Кафаров, А.Н. Самойлович, С.А. Козин, сталиндік қуғын-сүргін, жаңа тұжырымдар

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К ИСТОРИИ ПЕРЕВОДА «СОКРОВЕННОГО СКАЗАНИЯ МОНГОЛОВ» С.А. КОЗИНА

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Аннотация. *Введение.* Накопленный за последние годы исторической наукой Казахстана материал позволяет с новых позиций рассмотреть значение рукописи «Сокровенного сказания монголов», переведенного С.А. Козиным. *Цели и задачи.* Исследовать историю перевода С.А. Козиным этого важного источника, который хранит в себе еще множество загадок и по истории империи Чингисхана, в частности демографическому составу и политической истории. *Материалы и методы.* Для исследования данной темы автор использовал опубликованный текст «Сокровенного сказания монголов» в переводе С.А. Козина 1941 года, а также материалы архивов института востоковедения. Для объективного освещения темы автором были использованы методы сравнительного анализа текстов, интерпретации и сопоставления документов. Также был применен метод реконструкции событий и метод сопоставления имеющейся литературы различных авторов. *Выводы.* Как показывает углубленный анализ текста, рукопись «ССМ» были составлена с широким использованием словарного запаса не только из древнеманчуржского (ойратского), китайского, но и тюркского языков.

Ключевые слова: Сокровенное сказание монголов, китайский, монгольский, тюркские языки средневековья, переводы, П. Кафаров, А.Н. Самойлович, С.А. Козин, сталинские репрессии, постановления ВКП(б), новые выводы

Для цитирования: Аяған Б.Г. К истории перевода «Сокровенного сказания монголов» С.А. Козина // Отан тарихы. 2025. Т. 28. № 3. С. 563-572. [на англ.]. DOI: 10.51943/2788-9718_2025_28_3_563-572

Introduction. Among the modern translations, the manuscript conventionally referred to as The Secret History of the Mongols is the one closest in time to the history of the empire of Genghis Khan. It was translated into Russian by S.A. Kozin in 1941 [S.A. Kozin, The Secret History, 1941]. According to Kozin, the manuscript of The Secret History, discovered by later authors in the twentieth century, was first published in 1908 under the title Yuan Chao Bi Shi with commentaries by Li Wen-tian (published by Guan Gu Tang on the

basis of a Yuan-period manuscript, with a preface by the publisher Ye Dehui), and in the version preserved by P. Kafarov together with a Chinese text.

S.A. Kozin here in the introduction warns researchers that P. Kafarov himself, who has studied the monument in its Chinese versions to perfection (appendix - abridged translation and interlinear Mongolian-Chinese dictionary), persistently and authoritatively warned Mongolianists about the difficulties in translating the monument according to its Chinese transcription in the mentioned list. [Kozin, 1941: 14]. Kafarov also warned that the available copy itself “abounds in scribal errors made by the translator” [Kozin, 1941: 9].

In total, the preparation of the text, translation, and dictionary by S. A. Kozin took about fifteen years, and, as he himself reports, the work was completed in September 1935, with preparations for publication beginning in February 1936. The preface to the first volume of the newly translated *Secret History of the Mongols* was written by N. Poppe, corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences. The author of the preface quite justly observed that “the appearance of such a work in terms of significance would be no less than the discovery and first publication of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the *Song of the Nibelungs*, or *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*” [Kozin, 1941: 6].

The preface further notes that “this most valuable monument of ancient Mongolian literature, discovered in the mid-nineteenth century by one of the foremost Russian Orientalists, the sinologist Palladius Kafarov, has repeatedly attracted the attention of scholars. Yet, although nearly one hundred years have passed since its discovery, *The Secret History* still cannot be considered fully researched or studied...” There had also been no translation of this work into Russian or any other language [Kozin, 1941: 6]. In his introduction, P. Kafarov, who had thoroughly studied the monument in its purely Chinese versions (including an abridged translation and a Mongol-Chinese glossary), persistently and authoritatively warned Mongolists about the essentially “insurmountable” obstacles to translating the text at that time from its Chinese transcription in the aforementioned version [Kozin, 1941: 14]. Kafarov also cautioned that the extant copy itself “abounds in the translator's errors” [Kozin, 1941:9].

Overall, the preparation of the text, translation, and dictionary by S.A. Kozin took about fifteen years. As he himself reported, the work was completed in September 1935, and by February 1936 the preparation of *The Secret History* for publication had begun. The preface to the first volume of the newly translated *Secret History of the Mongols* was written by N. Poppe, corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences. The author of the preface quite rightly noted that “the appearance of such a work in terms of significance would be no less than the discovery and first publication of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the *Song of the Nibelungs*, or *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*” [Kozin, 1941: 6]. He also emphasized that “this most valuable monument of ancient Mongolian literature, discovered in the mid-nineteenth century by one of the foremost Russian Orientalists, the sinologist Palladius Kafarov, has repeatedly attracted scholarly attention. However, although almost one hundred years have passed since its discovery, *The Secret History* still cannot be regarded as thoroughly investigated and studied... Nor had it been translated into Russian or any other language” [Kozin, 1941:6].

Materials and Methods. In this study, the author relied on the published text of *The Secret History of the Mongols* translated by S. A. Kozin in 1941 [Kozin, S. A., *The Secret History*. Moscow; Leningrad, 1941:579], as well as a number of works on this subject by both Kazakhstani and foreign scholars, including medieval authors. Materials from the archives of the Institute of Oriental Studies published in open sources were also used. For an objective examination of the topic, the author employed methods of comparative textual analysis, interpretation, and document comparison. The reconstruction of events was also carried out using internet resources and cross-referencing of the available literature by various authors, including original Party resolutions of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) concerning the history of the formation of the Ulus of Jochi—the Golden Horde. However, it should be noted that the Russian translation of the manuscript was undertaken in the 1930s–1940s, at a time when the interference of Joseph Stalin and his entourage in the humanities—particularly in historical and philological scholarship—had significantly intensified, laying the foundation for the politicization of science.

Discussion. This work has been the subject of close attention of researchers since its creation, as it sheds light on the history of the formation of the largest state of the late Middle Ages, which was the empire created by Genghis Khan. Of the earliest works, the origin, formation and rise of the empire of Genghis Khan in the 13th century was reflected in the work, conventionally called later as “*The Secret History of the Mongols*”, written by unknown medieval authors. Apparently, such a manuscript really existed, since this work was used without reference at the end of the 13th century by the Persian author Ala ad-Din Ata-Melik Juvayni in the fundamental work “*Genghis Khan. History of the Conqueror of the World*” (*Tarikh-i Jahangushay*) and at the beginning of the 14th century by Rashid ad-Din Hamadani.

Both writers were closely connected to the court of Hülegü and his successors, which gave them access to chancery documents as well as to oral traditions concerning the biography of Chinggis Khan, his sons, the state structure, and tribal distinctions. In Juvayni's *History of the World Conqueror*, the first volume is devoted to the history of the "Mongols," focusing primarily on the life of Chinggis Khan, the role of Mongol and Turkic tribes, the ancestry of Chinggis Khan, and the reigns of his immediate successors.

Elements of these narratives can also be observed in Rashid al-Din's *Compendium of Chronicles* (*Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*), where he provides a more detailed account of Chinggis Khan's early life, his victories and defeats, the abduction of Börte, the division of the khan's empire among his sons, as well as autobiographical details of the great khans of the Ulus. Rashid al-Din also records the capture and destruction of Otrar in considerable detail [Rashid al-Din, vol. II, 2018: 137–138]. More broadly, his works are preceded by extensive prologues on the history of Islam. Much of the specific information could only have been obtained from Chinggis Khan's close associates or from his direct descendants—Hülegü, Ghazan Khan, or Öljeitü. His chronicles include vivid examples from the lives of Chinggis Khan, his commanders, and his descendants, together with descriptions of tribal histories, toponyms, and frequent references to the use of the Tatar or "Turkic language."

At the same time, much of this material does not appear in *The Secret History of the Mongols*, which suggests that Rashid al-Din may have received this information directly from the descendants of Chinggis Khan or members of Hülegü's circle in Iran. Separate episodes and adaptations from the *Secret History* are also encountered in later Turkic and European works, though the accounts of Plano Carpini, William of Rubruck, or Marco Polo do not always correlate with the information presented by Juvayni or Rashid al-Din. For example, Plano Carpini refers to the "Tartars" and mentions that he employed an interpreter ("tolmach"), who likely translated from the Tatar (Qipchaq) language [Journey to the Eastern Lands, 1999: 58, 61].

In the mid-seventeenth century, the Buddhist monk Luvsandanzan published the work *Altan shazhyre* ("Golden Genealogical Tradition"), a text that, in many respects, overlaps with the manuscript under our consideration. In this context, the term "golden" should not be understood literally as a reference to the metal, but rather in the sense of "precious," "highly revered," or "valuable." According to the Mongolist V. Kheisin and later the Russian scholar A. Shchastina, this monument was composed between 1651 and 1675. Although Luvsandanzan borrowed many plotlines from *The Secret History of the Mongols* (SHM), he presented the events in a freer manner, introducing his own interpretations of Buddhist cosmological traditions. Even the episodes concerning the birth of Temirshi-Temüjin and his investiture as Chinggis Khan are framed within the canons of Lamaist belief [Luvsandanzan, 2009: 22–23]. A characteristic feature of the text is the addition of numerous details: expanded dialogues, lists of material gifts absent from the SHM, and so forth. At the same time, the work lacks a table of contents, which was later provided by S.A. Kozin. Translators, moreover, likely introduced inaccuracies in transcribing names, titles, and toponyms, which complicates reconstruction of the original. Thus, what survives are essentially "translations of translations," while the authentic version may still be preserved in archives in the People's Republic of China.

No fragments resembling the SHM have been discovered in the writings of European missionaries of the thirteenth century, such as Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck, which suggests they were unfamiliar with this text. Both authors, particularly Plano Carpini (1250s), gave detailed accounts of Chinggis Khan and his entourage, yet there is no evidence of borrowings or references to the SHM. It is clear that such meticulous observers would have used or at least copied this material had they had access to it [*Travels to the Eastern Countries*, 1993: 33–39]. Marco Polo likewise shows no knowledge of the SHM: his early fourteenth-century account contains references to diplomatic correspondence in "Turkish" (most likely Old Uyghur or Kipchak), as well as information about the descendants of Chinggis Khan – Qubilai, Nayan, Qaidu, Qazan Khan, Arghun, Baidu, Berke, Toqta, and Noghai. However, he erroneously attributed the title of "great khan" to individuals who had never held this position, which indicates that his information was fragmentary and often second-hand [Marco Polo, 2004: 196–222].

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, fragments of the SHM were studied by European and Russian scholars. In 1866, Archimandrite Palladius Kafarov published *An Old Mongolian Tale about Chinggis Khan*, a translation of the Chinese version based on fragments in Old Mongolian and, possibly, Old Turkic. Yet Kafarov's translation contained numerous inaccuracies and distortions. In the twentieth century, S. A. Kozin noted that Kafarov often relied on Chinese equivalents for Mongolian words, which distorted their meaning [Kozin, 1941: 11–14]. Moreover, Kozin himself was working with a Mongolian text that had been re-rendered much later than the thirteenth century and was therefore significantly altered. He systematized the SHM into twelve sections, supplementing them with extensive commentaries, dictionaries, and indices [Kozin, 1941: 201].

The motifs of the SHM subsequently spread into later chronicles, and in the twentieth century the text was translated into modern Mongolian and Kazakh, primarily on the basis of Kozin's edition [M. Sultaniiuly, 1998: 221]. Among the Nogais and Kazakhs, the oral traditions of poetic narratives, which scholars often associate with the SHM, also remained well preserved. In the twenty-first century, scholarly interest has persisted, as evidenced by the richly illustrated edition *Mongolyn Nuuts Tovchoo / The Secret History of the Mongols* [Mongolyn Nuuts Tovchoo, 2014], published in both Mongolian and English. The ongoing debate about Kozin's translation is reflected in more recent research, including studies of Oirat-Turkic communities [Ayagan, 2023: 22–36].

Thus, the history of the study and translation of *The Secret History of the Mongols* demonstrates that what we possess today is not the original, but a repeatedly transmitted and reworked version. Although the content has undergone significant transformations, the text nonetheless retains its enduring historical and cultural value.

There are compelling reasons to believe that the Old Mongolian (Oirat) language underwent significant modernization from the thirteenth to the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries, enriched by the vocabulary of neighboring peoples, particularly the Turkic languages. In turn, the Turkic languages absorbed many concepts and terms from Old Mongolian and from other peoples of Eurasia and the East. It is quite possible that the original manuscript of *The Secret History of the Mongols*, composed in the thirteenth century, was written in a mixed Turko-Chinese-Old Mongolian form, similar to the Turko-Slavic monument *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*, though created somewhat earlier.

In 1936, scholars from the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR began translating a consolidated text, which was completed by 1939. It is noteworthy that S. A. Kozin, while mentioning many researchers and authors who, as he noted, “linked their names with the Secret History,” made insufficient use of Eastern authors of the thirteenth century. He briefly referred to the work of Rashid al-Din, compiled at the request of the descendants of Chinggis Khan, which contained a vast and relatively objective body of information on the life of Chinggis Khan and his sons, the activities of prominent figures, and the routes of military campaigns. It is clear that Persian authors were familiar with some version of the *Secret History*, and many episodes and fragments of the still-unrecovered original were retold in their works. Examples are plentiful: Rashid al-Din, for instance, described the campaigns of Möngke-Temür and the intrigues and rebellion of Ariq Böke in considerable detail, citing Juvayni [Rashid al-Din. 2018. Vol. 3: 215–217].

For various reasons, Soviet historians, Orientalists, and linguists in the 1930s–1940s had no access to the authentic text of the *Secret History* written in Chinese characters. Since the 1941 publication of Kozin's edition of the SHM, eighty-four years have passed, the Soviet Union has collapsed, yet questions surrounding the translation of the SHM remain unresolved.

In general, numerous translations of the *Secret History* appeared during the twentieth century in English, German, Hungarian, and Turkish. In the USSR and Kazakhstan, however, scholars had access only to fragments and individual episodes of the ancient source, and only in recent years have more complete copies of the work become available. Nevertheless, the importance of *The Secret History of the Mongols* is immense, and the value of its information remains highly relevant today. It was in this work that Palladius Kafarov first attempted to systematize and analyze the discovered versions. As S.A. Kozin himself emphasized, Kafarov “provides no information on the sources that served him for the variants he used, and the text of the History is written in colloquial language and contains many archaisms.” We believe that these “archaisms” could well have included numerous ancient Turkic expressions and terms.

The compositional style of the *Secret History* strongly resembles the models of songs, parables, and epics found in Kazakh, Nogai, and Kalmyk traditions of both the late medieval and modern periods. Consequently, specialists today face the task not only of finding the original but also of producing a new translation with the participation of experts in Chinese, Old Mongolian, Persian, and Turkic languages. Furthermore, the authors of this invaluable work may have used the Oirat language or, for example, Old Uyghur Turkic script. Occasionally, Persian expressions appear in the text, such as *daftari* (“notebooks”).

Researcher N. Poppe, in his preface, directly linked the 1941 publication of the translation of the *Secret History of the Mongols* to the 700th anniversary of the founding of the Mongol state. This association highlights the politicized character of the translation, since the empire itself included numerous tribes speaking Turkic, Chinese, or Persian languages. Moreover, Poppe himself admitted: “*This is not to say, however, that after the publication of S. A. Kozin's work all the questions connected with the monument can be considered finally and definitively resolved*” [Kozin, 1941: 7].

It is striking that both Poppe and Kozin rarely, if ever, used the terms “Turkic” or “Tatar” tribes and clans, although these designations were widely employed in reference to the empire of Chinggis Khan and

his sons in the works of Persian, Arab, European, Slavic, and Russian authors up to the beginning of the twentieth century. By contrast, the eminent scholar V.V. Bartold, who worked from the late nineteenth century into the 1930s, consistently emphasized the Turkic component of the Ulus of Jochi – the Golden Horde – and even prepared his well-known *Twelve Lectures on the History of the Turks*.

At the same time, while Poppe repeatedly referred to Mongolian and Chinese sources, he did not mention that the history of the empire of Chinggis Khan was also closely intertwined with the history of ancient and medieval Turkic-speaking peoples who had long inhabited the regions surrounding Karakorum. Poppe concluded his preface by remarking that the publication of Kozin's translation coincided with the ceremonial celebration by the friendly Mongolian People's Republic of the 700th anniversary of "*this first literary monument in the Mongolian language*," stressing that "*Mongolian historians and linguists received the edition and study of this monument from the hands of Soviet science*" (Kozin, 1941: 7]. It must be emphasized, however, that science should not be politically biased – it ought to remain objective and accurate. By tying Kozin's translation to the jubilee of the Mongolian Republic, this important work was effectively detached from the Turkic heritage of the Old Uyghur, Turko-Tatar, and indeed the broader Central Asian cultural traditions, including those of the Oirat-Kalmyk tribes.

In paragraph 224 of the *Secret History*, Chinggis Khan himself proclaimed: "*Now, when I stand before the Eternal Heavenly Power, being multiplied in my might by the heavens and the earth, having directed the all-speaking state onto the path of truth and united it under a single yoke, you shall establish for me a guard*" [Kozin, 1941: 36]. This statement explicitly acknowledges the multinational composition of his state.

As for the structure of Kozin's translation, the author indicated in his introduction that the work was divided into three equal parts, and that the transcription of the text may have been based on the Uyghur-Mongolian script system (as outlined by Academician B. Ya. Vladimirtsev). It is highly probable that the *Secret History of the Mongols* was completed on the banks of the Kherlen River around the 1240s. Some authors cautiously suggest that the compiler or editor of the work may have been Shigi-Qutuqu, a bright orphan of Tatar origin. In paragraph 203, Chinggis Khan entrusted Shigi-Qutuqu with the administration of the state judiciary and commanded: "*Let them record in the Blue Register – the Kökö Defter-Bichig – binding into books the registers of the division of all-speaking subjects, as well as judicial decisions*" [Kozin, 1941: 160]. In paragraph 252, Chinggis Khan further addressed him directly: "*You hold in your thoughts the Great Yasa – Yeke Yösü. Are you not, Shigi-Qutuqu, the eye of my vision and the ear of my hearing?*" [Kozin, 1941: 182].

The existence of Shigi-Qutuqu and Chinggis Khan's favorable attitude toward him are also confirmed by Rashid al-Din [Rashid al-Din. Vol. 1. 2018: 93].

Chinese scholars, followed by P. Kafarov, argued inconsistently, according to S.A. Kozin, when they insisted on the existence of a "lost version" of the chronicle, while at the same time completely denying the existence of Mongolian literature and even writing during the time of Chinggis Khan. The Turkic-speaking "Tatars" are presented as an extremely hostile tribe, whereas in the second part of the *Secret History of the Mongols. The Great Yasa*, the Tatars are described as a "Mongolic-speaking people, descendants of Tungusic tribes" [Kozin, 1941: 35]. According to Kozin, the author of several episodes may have been the sixty-five-year-old educated court chronicler Koko-Tsos (Kogetai).

From the perspective of methodology, Kozin often applied the works of Marxist-Leninist classics, in particular the strict division of society into classes: feudal lords and serfs, exploiters and the exploited [Kozin, 1941: 54–56, 74]. Remarkably, Jamukha, the most famous opponent of the young Chinggis Khan, is presented by him as a representative of a "democratic party," a conclusion that raises considerable perplexity. In the same *Introduction*, Kozin moves on to Oirat-Dzungar poetic epics such as the *Jangariad* and *Gesseriad*, in which he sought to trace further development of narrative motifs and historical continuity with the SHM. However, in our view, the narrative traditions and motifs of the *Secret History* were more fully continued in the works of Persian- and Turkic-speaking authors (Utemish-Khadzhi, Qadirqali Jalayiri, Abulgazi), as well as in the oral traditions of many Turkic-speaking peoples – Tatars, Kazakhs, Nogais – and in the epics about Tokhtamysh and Edige.

Several provisions and articles of the *Secret History* reappear in the later-discovered manuscript *Altan Tobchi*, published in 1937. The prominent Mongolian scholar Ts. Damdinsüren, whose views were relied upon by translators, argued that the *Secret History of the Mongols* was written after the fall of the Yuan dynasty, during the Ming period, and that it was composed within the framework of Chinese historiography alongside works such as the *Yuan Shi*. He also emphasized that the language of the SHM was very distant from modern Mongolian, and that no original in Old Mongolian had survived – or perhaps never existed – as

more than seven hundred years had already passed. What he likely had in mind was a later adaptation by the Mongolian scholar Tse Gun.

For these reasons, scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries studying the SHM had to rely on the translation of Palladius Kafarov, titled *An Old Mongolian Tale about Chinggis Khan*, and the 1941 translation by S.A. Kozin. The tables of contents for all twelve sections, as noted in the preface, were supplied by Kozin himself. Damdinsüren also pointed out that the base material, or an adaptation of it, was most likely used by the Persian scholar Rashid al-Din, as well as by Abulgazi of the Shibanid line.

Among other things, the translation of Palladius Kafarov's text was carried out during the period of the 1920s–1950s, when there was an active campaign against so-called “Pan-Turkism” and “Pan-Mongolism.” For this reason, the use of other “politically incorrect” sources was most likely subject to strict prohibition. In the *Introduction*, S. A. Kozin himself noted that the base text was colloquial Mongolian containing many “archaisms.” It is possible that under this definition of “archaisms” a whole corpus of Oirat or Turkic words was left untranslated and unused, which Kozin himself mentions in passing. Considering the Altaic language family, the Oirat-Kalmyk and Turkic dialects share many similarities. This has also been emphasized by the Kazakh translator M. Sultaniiauly, a specialist from Mongolia fluent in both Kazakh and modern Mongolian, who produced a direct Kazakh translation of the *Secret History* at the end of the twentieth century [Sultaniiauly, 1998: 221]. The author of the present article also paid particular attention to the role of Oirat-Turkic communities in the text of the *Secret History of the Mongols* in the Russian translation by S. A. Kozin [Ayagan, 2023a: 31–33].

In the early stages of organizing the translation of the *Secret History*, active participation was taken by the well-known Turkologist, Academician A.N. Samoilovich, who had previously discovered and published several monuments of Turkic writing. As a student of V. Radlov, A.N. Samoilovich had collaborated with such Orientalists as G. Potanin and V.V. Bartold, which deepened his knowledge of the history of Eastern peoples, especially those of Central Asia. Professor S.A. Kozin was a Mongolist who had once served in a mission to Mongolia and in the 1930s worked at the Institute of Oriental Studies. He was engaged in the translation of the *Secret History* alongside others as a specialist in the Mongolian language.

The translation and scholarly interpretation of the manuscript were entrusted to the Mongolian Studies Department of the Institute of Oriental Studies. A protocol published in the journal *Petersburg Oriental Studies* [1998: 67] reveals several aspects of the process behind Kozin's translation of the *Secret History*. According to these records, the meetings to discuss the translation took place regularly, and judging by the protocol, were highly contentious. One such meeting evidently occurred in September 1937, since there is a note indicating that the discussion should be resumed three months later.

It was noted in particular that: “While the Department agrees with V.M. Alekseev's positive evaluation, N. N. Poppe nevertheless pointed to a number of shortcomings. First, the reconstructed text did not everywhere conform to historical phonetics, and vowel harmony was not observed. Second, there were many errors in translation.” In the resolutions that followed, the participants proposed directives: “To ‘Mongolize’ the phonetics even further, to conclude an agreement for a transcription, to provide not an interpreted transcription but a literal transliteration of the characters, to conclude an agreement for a philological translation, and to publish the present version as a free adaptation of the latter.”

What is especially troubling is the directive that, for political reasons, scholars were instructed explicitly to “‘Mongolize’ the phonetics of the language of the *Secret History* and to publish it as a ‘free adaptation of the text.’”

In order to achieve these goals, S.A. Kozin was required to conclude two contracts and to revise the submitted text (St. Petersburg Branch of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences [PFA: F. 820. Op. 3. D. 647: 1, 2; archival references cited in *Petersburg Oriental Studies*). Kozin was also advised to consult with V. M. Alekseev and B. I. Pankratov (on transcription), as well as Ts.Zh. Zhamtsarano (on translation). Kozin agreed with most of the remarks and declared that “he regards his work as the product of a collective effort and assumes in advance that he cannot accomplish it alone” [PFA: F. 820. Op. 3. D. 124: 1. 39; AV: F. 152, Op. 1a. D. 532: 1. 40]. Unfortunately, as one expert later noted, the scholarly discussion did not have a purely academic outcome. The protocol of the discussion of the *Secret History* made no mention of Alekseev's review or even of his presence at the first session. Three months later, the secretary of the Department, V. A. Kazakevich, presented Kozin with a re-edited copy of the protocol, possibly altered for unknown reasons. According to this revised version, Kozin was required to discuss all corrections he proposed at cabinet sessions. He considered this procedure insulting and therefore unacceptable. On November 11, 1937 (apparently), Kozin submitted a statement to the Director of the Institute,

A.N. Samoilovich. Alekseev supported Kozin, and the administration permitted publication of the *Secret History* in Kozin's own edition [PFA. F. 820, Op. 3. D. 421: l. 48].

According to Kozin, however, during the directorship of A. N. Samoilovich the work could not be published due to the opposition of B. I. Pankratov and some staff members of the Mongolian Department. It is quite possible that Samoilovich and Pankratov advocated a more scholarly and objective translation of the *Secret History*, including its Turkic fragments. Only after the arrest and isolation of A.N. Samoilovich and several other scholars in 1937–1938, as well as Pankratov's transfer to contract work, did conditions arise – in Kozin's view – that allowed publication of the *Secret History*, but already in another, heavily altered version. Other researchers with independent views on the translation of the SHM were apparently also removed from the staff of the Institute or excluded from the circle of translators.

The situation changed drastically after the arrest and isolation of Director A.N. Samoilovich and his supporters by the NKVD in 1937. In 1938, Academician Samoilovich was executed. It is striking that neither Poppe, in his preface, nor Kozin, in his introduction, mentioned the name of Academician Samoilovich or his colleagues, the Turkologists, who had done so much to organize the translation in the first place. By the time Kozin's translation was published in 1941, Samoilovich was not only isolated but had already perished in Stalin's prisons for some alleged crimes – perhaps even “Pan-Turkism” – to which he had no connection.

Results. Thus, the basis for studying the history of Ulugh Ulus-Ulus Jochi in the Soviet period was deliberately formed on the dogma of the “Secret History” of the Mongols”, which allegedly belonged exclusively to the language and history of the Mongolian tribes, to the detriment of the Turkic-speaking population of the empire of Genghis Khan. The comments also mention fragments from the Chinese language of the text as a source. In the 1920-1940s, a struggle was launched in the USSR against the so-called “pan-Turkism” and, apparently, the leaders of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) everywhere destroyed and erased any mentions and memory of the Turkic heritage in the history of the Ulus Jochi (Golden Horde). It is quite possible that in order to exploit the political situation and conceal reliable information on linguistic symbols, the party committees of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in the 1930s and then in the 1950s carried out a number of political measures to control scientific translations, including the process of translating a medieval manuscript that later received the name «The Secret History of the Mongols».

Conclusion. As a result of such party interference, scholarship received a translation of one of the greatest works of the medieval era that was neither entirely reliable nor fully objective, yet it has been used – and continues to be used – by many modern researchers. The measures adopted at that time led to a slowdown in the study of the history of Chinggis Khan, the Ulus of Jochi, and the peoples of Central Asia – above all, the Turkic population and the Oirats themselves. Nevertheless, researchers in many countries still employ the translation by S. A. Kozin as a “classical” and authoritative source, though, in our view, it should only be regarded as such with considerable reservations. By the 1940s, as we have shown, it was not scholarly inquiry but rather ideological directives and instructions from party leaders that determined the directions of research.

The author raises this issue because a number of episodes and translations in the *Secret History of the Mongols* demand a new reading by specialists proficient in Chinese as well as in Old Mongolian–Oirat and Turkic scripts. Another serious obstacle for historical scholarship was the use of the works of Marxist classics, to which the head of the Russian translation project, S. A. Kozin, repeatedly referred. Particularly striking is his constant emphasis on class antagonisms and “feudal struggles” in the text of the *Secret History*. However, we cannot reproach the authors too harshly for their reliance on Marxist methodology; historical scholarship in the Soviet period – especially in the 1930s–1950s – was under the strict control and pressure of party committees and the security organs (OGPU–NKVD).

The direct and heavy-handed management of scholarship in the USSR was most vividly and fully reflected in the Resolution of the Central Committee of the VKP(b) of August 9, 1944, “*On the State and Measures for the Improvement of Mass-Political and Ideological Work in the Tatar Party Organization*”, which criticized “*serious shortcomings and errors of a nationalist character in the interpretation of the history of Tataria (embellishing the Golden Horde, popularizing the khan-feudal epic of Edigei)*”. In line with this directive, a series of similar documents concerning the history of the Ulus of Jochi – the Golden Horde – in Kazakhstan were also adopted, as we have discussed in our earlier research [Ayagan, 2020: 206]. Party interference not only hampered an objective study of the empire of Chinggis Khan but also hindered the proper use of sources that underlay Kozin's translation of the *Secret History*.

It is quite possible, in our view, that the deciphering of certain words, terms, and place names that are difficult to translate from Chinese might be found within Oirat or medieval Turkic languages. Today, modern

scholarly tools and newly available sources make it possible to revisit the text and to produce new, academically sound commentary on the *Secret History of the Mongols*.

Despite the criticisms expressed, we should note that the contribution of scholars such as S.A. Kozin and his colleagues – who published the Russian translation of the *Secret History of the Mongols* in 1941 – was immense. At the same time, for various reasons, researchers have still not clarified, or continue to interpret unilaterally, the names of communities, political unions, and dominant groups within the empire of Chinggis Khan.

Thus, the Russian-language translation of the *Secret History of the Mongols*, compiled, translated, and published in 1941 by a group of specialists led by S.A. Kozin, allows us to revisit many aspects of this monumental work. However, for a deeper and more objective translation of the base material, collaborative efforts are required involving specialists proficient in Classical Chinese, Old Mongolian, and Old Turkic languages, so as to produce a new and accurate reading of this unique text.

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ОТАН ТАРИХЫ № 28 (3). 2025

Ainur Dauletovna Zhuandykova, Kuanysh Aldabergenovich Iskakov

THE HISTORY OF KAZAKH MIGRATION TO IRAN: CAUSES, STAGES AND CONSEQUENCES.....553

Burkitbay Gelmanuly Ayagan

ON THE HISTORY OF THE TRANSLATION OF "THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS" BY S.A. KOZIN.....563

Makhabbat M. Kozybayeva

SOCIAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS OF DISENFRANCHISEMENT IN KAZAKHSTAN IN THE 1920S–1930S.....573

Nazym Amanzholova, Aliya Oskembay, Kenzhegul Tergembay

YOUTUBE AS A PLATFORM FOR THE REPRESENTATION OF OTYNSHY ALZHANOV: INTERPRETATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN DIGITAL MEDIA.....591

Ziyabek E. Kabuldinov, Olzhas B. Kuanbay, Ualikhan S. Ibraev

JAPANESE HISTORIOGRAPHY FROM ANCIENT TIMES TO 1912: EVOLUTION OF HISTORICAL THOUGHT AND SOURCES.....601

Oraz Sapashevich Sapashev, Samat Kairollaevich Samashev

THE TRADITION OF CONTINUITY IN STATE STANDARDS AND WEAPONRY AMONG THE SAKA, XIONGNU, AND TURKS.....617

Toraigyrov Erzhan Muratovich, Bakirova Zhansaya Bazaralyevna

DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT IN THE PRIIRTYSH REGION FROM THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY TO THE 1920S.....638

Zauresh Galimzhanovna Saktaganova, Tolkynay Kuandykzy Sakabay

FOOD AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE MEASURES FOR DESTITUTE CHILDREN DURING THE FAMINE OF THE 1930S (ON THE EXAMPLE OF CENTRAL KAZAKHSTAN).....650

Абдукаюм Абдукадиров

УСТАНОВЛЕНИЕ СОВЕТСКОЙ ВЛАСТИ В ТУРКЕСТАНЕ И ПРОЦЕСС ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОСТИ НА ТЕРРИТОРИИ СОВРЕМЕННОГО УЗБЕКИСТАНА (1917–1924 гг.).....660

Айгүл Молдалиқызы Сманова

ГЕНЕРАЛ В. СИКОРСКИЙДІҢ ЭМИГРАНТТЫҚ ҮКІМЕТІ: САЯСИ КЕЛБЕТІ МЕН ХАЛЫҚАРАЛЫҚ ІС-ӘРЕКЕТІ.....669

Айнур Канатовна Кайруллина, Альбина Абеновна Максумова

ОБЩЕСТВЕННО-ПОЛИТИЧЕСКАЯ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТЬ СТАРШЕГО СУЛТАНА БАЯНАУЛЬСКОГО ВНЕШНЕГО ОКРУГА КАЗАНГАПА БИ САТЫБАЛДЫУЛЫ.....681

Сұлтан Хан Аққұлұлы Жүсіп, Сулушаш Рахимжановна Сарманова, Халил Борисович Маслов

ӘЛИХАН БӨКЕЙХАННЫҢ ИМПЕРАТОРЛЫҚ РЕСЕЙ ГЕОГРАФИЯЛЫҚ ҚОҒАМЫНЫҢ БАТЫС-СІБІР БӨЛІМІ ҚҰРАМЫНДА ҚАЗАҚ ДАЛАСЫН ЗЕРТТЕУГЕ ҚОСҚАН ҮЛЕСІ.....690

Ахметова Раушан Дюсенбековна, Қонбай Ерке

1930-ШЫ ЖЖ. АШАРШЫЛЫҚ КЕЗЕҢІНДЕГІ БАЛАЛАР ТАҒДЫРЫ (БАТЫС ҚАЗАҚСТАН Өңірі мысалында).....705

Болат Сағидоллаұлы Жұмағұлов, Лесқали Базарғалиұлы Бердіғажин, Алдар Сәрсенұлы Сәрсенов

1931 ЖЫЛҒЫ МАУСЫМДАҒЫ БОСАҒА ШАЙҚАСЫ: ҰРЫС ТАКТИКАСЫ, ӘСКЕР КҮШІ.....719

Гульмира Усенбаевна Орынбаева

ЭТНОГРАФИЯ КАЗАХСТАНА МЕЖДУ ПРИТЯЖЕНИЕМ «УХОДЯЩЕГО ПОЛЯ» И «КОЛХОЗНОЙ» ПОВЕСТКОЙ (2-я половина 40-х – 50-е гг. XX в.).....732

Дидар Бейсенғалиевна Касымова, Болат Кудайбергеноұлы, Алмас Каиргельдинович Кенжеғалин

ПИСЬМО 43 ИЗ КЕНТАУ В ЦК КП КАЗАХСТАНА: ОПЫТ АНАЛИЗА.....749

Динара Кайсаровна Сулейменова, Алпысбес Махсат Алпысбесұлы

ВНЕШНЯЯ ПОЛИТИКА ХАНА ТОКТАМЫША В 1380-1395 ГОДАХ.....767

Еңлік Қабыкенқызы Абеуова, Анар Еркенқызы Кәрімова, Гүлфира Елубайқызы Отепова

Ә.Х. МАРҒҰЛАННЫҢ ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ ГУМАНИТАРЛЫҚ ҒЫЛЫМДАРДЫҢ ДАМУЫНЫҢ КӨРІНІСІ РЕТІНДЕГІ РЕЦЕНЗИЯЛЫҚ ҚЫЗМЕТІ (1940-1960 жж.).....777

Ерден Ерназарович Ибраев, Гульмира Келдыбаевна Нурушева, Жангельды Арсенович Шаукенов

МЕТОДОЛОГИЯ КУЛЬТУРНОЙ ИСТОРИИ В КОНТЕКСТЕ КАЗАХСТАНСКОГО КИНЕМАТОГРАФА.....790

Жаксылык Муратович Сабитов

ШЫҒЫС ХАН ӘСКЕРІМЕН ШЫҒЫС ДЕШТІ ҚЫПШАҚТЫ 1210-1230-ЖЫЛДАРЫ ЖАУЛАП АЛУЫ.....801

Кенжебаев Габит Капезович, Мурзаходжаев Куаныш Мадиевич

СВЕТСКИЕ И МУСУЛЬМАНСКИЕ УЧЕБНЫЕ ЗАВЕДЕНИЯ В КАЗАХСТАНЕ НА РУБЕЖЕ XIX–XX ВЕКОВ: ИСТОРИОГРАФИЧЕСКИЙ АСПЕКТ.....812

Құдайбергенова Айжамал Ибрагимқызы, Абдулина АқсұңқарТұрсынқызы

ҚАЗАҚСТАН ҚАЛАЛАРЫНДАҒЫ 1920-1930 ЖЫЛДАРДАҒЫ ЭТНОДЕМОГРАФИЯЛЫҚ ҮДЕРІСТЕР.....827

Нұрсан Әлімбай, Болат Құдайбергенұлы Смағұлов

РЕСЕЙДІҢ ҚАЗАҚ ӨЛКЕСІН АГРАРЛЫҚ ОТАРЛАУЫНЫҢ НЕГІЗГІ СУБЪЕКТИЛЕРІ. КРЕСТЬЯНДАРДЫҢ ЖЕТЕКШІ СУБЪЕКТИГЕ АЙНАЛУЫ (XVIII – 1917).....844

Өтеубай Қожақұлы, Абусаид Гафурұлы Асқар

XIX ғ. II-ЖАРТЫСЫ МЕН XX ғ. БАС КЕЗІНДЕГІ СЫРДАРІЯ ОБЛЫСЫНДАҒЫ САУДА МЕН ӨНЕРКӘСІПТІҢ ДАМУЫ.....881

Самал Сағнайқызы, Спатай Алтынбекович Сартаев, Салтанат Адыровна Нусупбаева

КОЛЛЕКТИВИЗАЦИЯ И РЕПРЕССИИ: ТРАНСФОРМАЦИЯ КАЗАХСКОГО ОБЩЕСТВА В XX ВЕКЕ.....895

Сейдехан Нұрмаханұлы Әлібек, Ержан Джаркинбаевич Пазиров, Асан Үсінов

«ҮЛКЕН ТЕРРОР» ЖЫЛДАРЫ ОҢТҮСТІКТЕ ҚЫЗМЕТ АТҚАРҒАН АЛАШ ҚАЙРАТКЕРЛЕРІНІҢ ҚУҒЫНДАЛУЫ АРХИВ МАТЕРИАЛДАРЫ МЕН МЕРЗІМДІ БАСЫЛЫМ БЕТТЕРІНДЕ.....907

Тимур Әкімханұлы Әпендиев, Нұржігіт Момынбекұлы Абдуқадыров, Мадина Анатольевна Ермаханова

ГЕРМАНИЯДАҒЫ ҚАЗІРГІ ДЕМОГРАФИЯЛЫҚ ТЕНДЕНЦИЯЛАР МЕН ПРОБЛЕМАЛАР (1991-2024 жж.).....920

Токтабай Ахмет Уалханұлы

ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ ИРРИГАЦИОННОГО ЗЕМЛЕДЕЛИЯ В ЖЕТЫСУ И ЮЖНОМ КАЗАХСТАНЕ.....936

Шолпан Аширалиевна Торгаутова, Гульжан Даулетбековна Сугирбаева, Женгиз Буяр

ДИНАМИКА ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ И РАЗВИТИЯ ПОЛИЭТНИЧЕСКОГО СОСТАВА ЮЖНОГО КАЗАХСТАНА В КОНЦЕ XIX в. - 1924 г.....946

Эльмира Серікбайқызы Абдукамалова, Ақмарал Ғосманқызы Ибраева, Пердехан Бекмағанбетұлы Мұсырманқұл

«РАДЛОВ АЛЬБОМЫНДАҒЫ» ҚАЗАҚ МӘДЕНИЕТІНІҢ КӨРІНІСІ: МУЗЕЙЛІК АТРИБУЦИЯ МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІ.....965

Редакцияның мекен-жайы:

050100, Қазақстан Республикасы, Алматы қ., Шевченко көшесі, 28
Ш.Ш. Уәлиханов атындағы Тарих және этнология институты
«Отан тарихы» журналының редакциясы

Сайтқа сілтеме: <https://otan.history.iie.kz>

Тел.: +7 (727) 272-46-54.

E-mail: otanhistory@gmail.com.

Журнал Қазақстан Республикасының Ақпарат және қоғамдық келісім министрлігінде
1998 ж. 9 наурызда тіркеліп, N 158-ж кезегіне ие болды.

Мақалаларды қайта бастырып жариялағанда, микрофильмге және басқа да көшірмелерге түсіргенде
міндетті түрде журналға сілтеме жасау қажет.