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L. S. PUČKOVSKIJ

THE DATE OF COMPOSITION OF THE BOLOR TOLI

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THE DATE OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOLOR TOLI

BY

L. S. PUČKOVSKIJ (Leningrad)

The date of the composition of $Bolor\ toli$ — one of the most important Mongolian chronicles of the early 19th century — has been for a long time an unsettled question. This paper proposes to throw some light on this problem. For this purpose we have used the manuscript F 305 t. Sh. of the $Bolor\ toli$ (further $Bolor\ toli\ I$) preserved in the Institute of the Asiatic Peoples, Academy of Science of the USSR and the South-Gobi version of the same work (further $Bolor\ toli\ II$).

In the colophon of Bolor toli I the author writes the following about the time of its composition: morin jil-un čayan sarača ekilen bičiged üy-e üy-e bay-a bay-a nemen nemen bičigseger takiy-a jilun tabun sarayin sineyin sayin edüre tegüsgen bičigsen — "...commencing to write from the first month of the horse year I continued to write from time to time little by little, augmenting and augmenting and finished to write on the prosperous day of the first decade of the fifth month in the hen year".

A. D. Rudnev, to whom we owe the first information on the chronicle Bolor toli, in connection with the dates of its composition has briefly remarked: "He (the author of Bolor toli) wrote his chronicle from the year horse till the year hen (perhaps 3 or 15 years and so on [?]) little by little, augmenting..." Nevertheless Rudnev did not undertake to determine to which cycle of sixty years (rab-byun) and to which period of twelwe years the years horse and hen belong, he only restricted himself to state: "The events lasted till the twenties of the last century (because the enthronement of Emperor Tao-kuang — Törü Gereltü, that is 1820, is mentioned)." The details mentioned by Rudnev made it not possible to fix the date of the composition of the Bolor toli, all the more so as the year 1820 quoted by Rudnev as the year for the succession of Törü Gereltü (Tao-kuang) is not exact. In fact we read

¹ Bolor toli, 156a.

 $^{^2}$ A. D. Rudnev, Заметки о монгольской литературе II, Историческая летопись "Болор толи": ZVORAO XV (StPbg. 1904) pp. 033—034 (henceforth referred to as Rudnev, Letopisj "Bolor toli").

³ Rudnev, Letopisj "Bolor toli", p. 034.

in Bolor toli I that the Emperor who followed the rule of Sayisiyaltai irügeltü (Chinese Chia-ch'ing): arban dörbedüger jiran-u čayayčin moyai jildu... yeke siregen sayuju on-u ner-e törü gereltü-yin terigün on kemebei — "ascended the throne in the year white snake of the fourteenth sixty-year (period) and therefore this year was styled 'the first year of the rule of Törü Gereltü'".4

In the table of Pozdneev this year has the name eme temür (čayayčin) moyai "female-iron (white) snake" in Manchu šaxun meixe, in Chinese hsing-szu. This is the 14th year of the 14th rab-byun and corresponds to the year 1821 of the European calendar. According to the Chinese calendar, the first year of Tao-kuang (Törü Gereltü) is registered under the cyclic sign hsin-chi and began on the 3rd February, 1821 and lasted till the 22th January, 1822. From this it can be seen that almost the whole of the first year of Törü Gereltü's reign was in 1821 and this can be taken as the first year of his rule.

The opinion of B. Laufer, that the chronicle *Bolor toli* was written "after 1820" was certainly based on the conclusions of Rudnev cited above.

- B. I. Korolj started from the fact that the chronicle *Bolor toli* was continued till the year of the enthronement of *Törü Gereltü*, that is till 1821, which he determined correctly. The years *horse* and *hen* being the nearest to this date are 1822 and 1825, and they were taken by Korolj as the dates of the composition of *Bolor toli*. Later (see below p. 220) we shall see that these dates are wrong. Further, Korolj did not pay attention to the dates 1834—1837 which were mentioned earlier.
- W. Heissig knew the version *Bolor toli I* from the publications of C. Ž. Žamcarano¹⁰ and A. D. Rudnev.¹¹ He also mentioned other copies of *Bolor*
 - ⁴ Bolor toli I, 154a.
- ⁵ "Table of the 60-year cycle with the names of the years in Mongolian, Manchu and Chinese languages and their corresponding years in the Christian calendar". Supplement to the work of A. M. Pozdneev, Монгольская летопись "Эрденийн эрихэ" (St. Pbg. 1883), henceforth referred to as Table of Pozdneev.
- ⁶ P. Hoang, Concordance des chronologies néoméniques chinois et européenne: Variétés sinologiques no 29, (Shanghai 1910), p. 335 (henceforth P. Hoang); cf. Chen Yüan, A Comparative Daily Calendar for Chinese, European and Mohammedan History (Peking 1926), Vol. V, chüan 19, f. 6a (henceforth Chen Yüan). For data from these works, the author is indebted to Ju. L. Korolj to whom he wishes to express his gratitude.
 - ⁷ B. Laufer, Skizze der mongolischen Literatur: Keleti Szemle VIII (1907), p. 215.
- ⁸ В. І. Korolj, Монгольская летопись "Болор толи": Монгольский сборник, (Moscow 1959), р. 176.
- ⁹ L. S. Pučkovskij, Монгольские, бурят-монгольские и ойратские рукописи и ксилографы Института востоковедения (Moscow—Leningrad 1957), р. 60 (henceforth Pučkovskij, *Mongoljskie rukopisi i ksilografy*).
- ¹⁰ W. Heissig, *Bolur Erike* (Peiping 1946), p. 34, with reference to C. Ž. Žamcarano's Монгольские летописи XVII в., (Moscow—Leningrad 1936), p. 80.
- ¹¹ W. Heissig, Die mongolische Geschichtsschreibung im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert: Saeculum III, Heft 2, p. 227, henceforth Heissig, Mongolische Geschichtsschreibung.

toli with reference to one of his papers.¹² The date of the composition was indicated by him in different ways.

In one instance he writes: "... (about 1820)...".¹³ The source of this date is not given, but it seems to be evident that it is based on the statements of Rudnev (see above p. 217). In another place we read: "1810—1813".¹₄ The origin of this date is not clear, the more so considering that the first year of the reign of Törü Gereltü, that is 1821, is mentioned in the text (see above p. 218). In a third work of Heissig it is stated that Bolor toli was composed "about 1810—1813...",¹⁵ but this raised doubts even in Heissig, since immediately after the above dates he suggests others: "(1822—1825 (?))".¹⁶ From the text of Heissig one can conclude that he started in this case from the date 1820 which was indicated by Rudnev and Laufer¹² but he did this not without any suspicion since he used parenthesis and question-mark.¹⁶ In his most recent work Heissig referred to Bolor Toli 1834/37 (Bolor toli I) and Bolor toli 1834/37¹⁰ (Bolor toli II). In another place of the same work the author writes: "Bolur toli composed by Jimbadorji (1834—1837)".²⁰ These dates were already indicated by other Mongolists.²¹

The different opinions concerning the date of the composition of Bolor toli were formed because of the uncertainty of the dates contained in the colophon of the same work. The text of the chronicle gives possibility for a more precise dating of its composition. In the narrative of the legendary rulers of Shambhala it is stated: edüge ene üy-e-dü qoriduyar rigdan mahabala qayan ene törü gereltü-yin doloduyar on ulayayčin yaqai jilun qaburun segül sarayin arban tabun-a sambhala-yin siregen-a sayubai "...now in the present times, the twentieth [ruler of Shambhala] — Rigdan-mahapala-qayan —

In the note 44 to the quoted page, W. Heissig refers to the paper of A. D. Rudnev, Заметки о монгольской литературе II, Историческая летопись "Болор толи": ZVORAO XV (1904), pp. 032—034.

¹² W. Heissig, Ergänzungen zu einem mongolischen Textfragment über Galdan; Sinologische Arbeiten III (1945), p. 169; reference to this paper see W. Heissig, Marginalien zur Ordos-Chronik Subud Erike (1835): ZDMG C (1951), p. 609, note 2 (henceforth Heissig, Marginalien), cf. also his Mongolische Geschichtsschreibung, p. 228, note 47 where he_mentions five copies of this work.

¹³ W. Heissig, Bolur Erike, p. 34.

¹⁴ W. Heissig, Marginalien, p. 609.

¹⁵ W. Heissig, Mongolische Geschichtsschreibung, p. 227.

¹⁶ Op. cit., p. 227.

¹⁷ Op. cit., p. 227, note 44.

¹⁸ W. Heissig, Mongolische Geschichtsschreibung, p. 227.

¹⁹ W. Heissig, Die Familien- und Kirchengeschichtsschreibung der Mongolen I (Wiesbaden 1959), p. 9 (henceforth Heissig, Geschichtsschreibung der Mongolen).

²⁰ W. Heissig, Geschichtsschreibung der Mongolen, p. 171 with reference to the second volume of the same work which has not yet been published.

²¹ Pučkovskij, Mongolskie rukopisi i ksilografy, p. 60.

⁸ Acta Orientalia XVI/2.

ascended the throne of Shambhala on the fifteenth (day) of the last spring month of the year red pig — the seventh year of the rule of Törü Gereltü...".²² The year red pig is defined in the table of Pozdneev as follow: eme yal (ulayayčin) yaqai 'Female-fire (red)-pig', Manchu fulahun ulgan, Chinese tung-hai. This is the 21th year of the 14th rab-byun and corresponds to the year 1827.²³ According to the Chinese calendar the seventh year of the rule of Tao-kuang (Törü Gereltü) is the year under the cyclic sign ting-hai and commenced on the 27th January, 1827 and ended on the 14th February, 1828.²⁴ On the basis that almost the whole of the seventh year of Törü Gereltü's reign corresponds to the year 1827 we have to take this as the year of the given period. In the Mongolian text of Bolor toli I the 15th day of the last spring month is given.²⁵ If we start from the fact that this month corresponds to the third month of the year, and if we rely on the work of Hoang²⁶ we find that this day is the 10th April, 1827 according the European calendar.

We have to see in the above statement an attempt of the author of Bolor toli to fix the date of the enthronement of one of the mythic rulers of Shambhala. This seems to be important for the Mongolian author because there is some inconsistency concerning the chronology of these mythic rulers in the works of Tibetan historians (see for instance the works of the well-known astrologue Phur-bu or such scholars as Bu-ston (1289—1364), Mkhasgrub dge-legs dpal-bza'n (1385—1483) and others.²⁷ The author of Bolor toli, the dge-slon ta-lama Jambadorji, who was well-read in the Buddhist literatuture held it as important to fix the date punctually which pertained to the sphere of interest of the Mongolian historians and readers of those times. (Cf. the MS F 159 which quotes among Buddhist compilations issues from the Bolor toli which encloses the description of the country Shambhala and the history of its rulers.)²⁸

From the dates pointed out above it is clear that the chronicle was written after the year 1827 and consequently we have to refer the years horse and hen (cf. p. 217 above) to a later period as it has been in the cases quoted above. The correct date of the composition of Bolor toli can be fixed with the help of the table below. The table shows the years horse and hen in the five periods of the 14th rab-byun and their corresponding years according to the European calendar.

²² Bolor toli I, 12a.

²³ Table of A. M. Pozdneev.

²⁴ P. Hoang, p. 335, cf Chen Yüan, vol. V, chüan 19, fol. 7b.

²⁵ Bolor toli I, 12a.

²⁶ P. Hoang, p. 335, cf. Chen Yüan vol. V, chüan 19, fol. 7b.

²⁷ G. C. Cybikov, Буддист паломник у святынь Тибета (Petrograd 1919), pp. 371—372.

²⁸ Pučkovskij, Mongolskjie rukopisi i ksilografy, p. 70.

Periods and their corresponding years in the European calendar	The Mongolian name of the year horse	The Mongolian name of the year hen
	and their corresponding years according to the European calendar in the table of A. M. Pozdneev	
I 1807—1818	ere temür (čayan) morin male-iron-(white) horse: 1810	eme usun (qaraγčin) takiya female-water-(black) hen: 1813
П 1819—1830	ere usun (qara) morin male-water-(black) horse: 1822	eme modun (kökegčin) takiya female-wood-(blue) hen: 1825
III 1831—1842	ere modun (köke) morin male-wood-(blue) horse: 1834	eme yal (ulayayčin) takiya female-fire-(red) hen: 1837
IV 1843—1854	ere yal (ulayan) morin male-fire-(red) horse: 1846	eme siroi (sirarčin) takiya female-earth-(yellow) hen: 1849
V 1855—1866	ere siroi (sira) morin male-earth-(yellow) horse: 1858	eme temür (čayayčin) takiya female-iron-(white) hen: 1861

If we start from the fact that the chronicle was written after the year 1827, and if we utilize the above table we have to state that the date given in Bolor toli as morin jil 'horse year' (more exactly ere modun köke morin jil 'male-wood-blue horse year') is pertaining to the third period of the 14th rab-byuñ and corresponds to the year 1834, further the takiya jil 'hen year' (more exactly: eme yal ulayayčin takiya jil 'female-fire-red hen year') pertains also to the third period of the 14th rab-byuñ and corresponds to the year 1837.

Thus according to the data contained in *Bolor toli I* this work was written between 1834 and 1837. Now it remains to fix the month and the days and their respective years in the European calendar which was not undertaken in the publications cited above (see pp. 217—219).

In the Mongolian text we read:

- 1) The work was commenced: ... morin jil-un čayan sarača... 'from the first month of the horse year'.
- 2) The composition of the work was finished: takiya jil-un tabun sarayin sineyin sayin edüre "...till the prosperous day of the first decade of the fifth month in the year hen".

The corresponding dates in the European calendar:

An interval between the 9th of February and 9th of March, 1834. Cf. the work of Hoang.²⁹

One of the days from the period beginning with the 3rd of June and ending on the 12th of June 1837. Cf. the work of Hoang.³⁰

²⁹ P. Hoang, p. 336, cf. Chen Yüan, vol. V, chüan 19, fol. 9a—9b.

³⁰ P. Hoang, p. 337, cf. Chen Yüan, vol. V, chüan 19, fol. 10a.

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Since the day of the first month and the day of the first decade is not given, it is not possible to fix a more exact date for the commencement than the interval between 9th February and 9th March, 1834 and for the conclusion one of the days between the 3rd of June and 12th of June of 1837.

In 1957 in the local Museum of the South Gobi aymak, Mongolian People's Republic, in Dalandzadgad H. Pêrlêê discovered a new manuscript of the Bolor toli. The dates given in this colophon³¹ confirmed our conclusions drawn above. Concerning the date of the composition of Bolor toli, its author writes:
... törü gereltü-yin arban dörbedüger on morin jil-un čayan sara-yin (...)³²
-eče ekilen üy-e üy-e bay-a bay-a nemejü bičigseger arban doloduyar on takiy-a jil-un tabun sar-a-yin sayin (...)³³ tegüsügsen...³⁴ — "began (to write) from (...) the first month of the fourteenth year of the rule of Törü Gereltü, the year horse, I continued to write from time to time, little by little, augmenting (the work) and finished (to write) on the prosperous (day) (...) of the fifth month of the seventeenth year (of the same period), the year hen..."³⁵

From the text cited it can be seen that the mentioned years of the 60-year cycle wholly overlap the cyclic years of Bolor toli I. In the given list the indicated years are given together with the years of rule of Törü Gereltü, and this makes it possible to fix more exactly the time of the composition of Bolor toli. According to the Chinese calendar the 14th year of the rule of Tao kuang (Törü Gereltü) is the year under the cyclic sign chia-wu which began with the 9th February, 1834 and ended on the 28th January, 1835. Since this interval corresponds almost wholly to the year 1834 this we, have to take as the fourteenth year of the rule of Törü Gereltü. The seventeenth year of the same ruling period is the year under the cyclic sign ting-yu and began with the 5th February, 1837 and eneded on the 25th January, 1828. As the greater part of this time overlaps the year 1837 this can be taken as the seventeenth year of the rule of Törü Gereltü. These years are the same which were fixed on the basis of the analysis of Bolor toli I.

H. Pêrlêê, regrettably, was not quite exact when he wrote: "The forteenth year of the rule of *Törü Gereltü* corresponds to the year 1835 and the seventeenth to 1838". This inexactness would not have occurred if he had

³¹ Ch. Pêrlêê, Қолофон южногобийского списка "Болор толи": Монгольский сборник (Moscow 1959), p. 182—187, (Henceforth Pêrlêê, *Južnogobijskij spisok*).

³² The dots in the round brackets are of the Mongolian text as can be seen on the photo static copy (Pêrlêê, *Južnogobijskij spisok*, p. 185).

³³ Cf. note 32.

³⁴ Pêrlêê, Južnogobijskij spisok, p. 185.

³⁵ Cf. the translation of Pêrlêê in Južnogobijskij spisok, p. 186.

³⁶ P. Hoang, p. 336, Chen Yüan, vol. V, chüan 19, f. 9a—9b.

³⁷ P. Hoang, p. 337, cf. Chen Yüan vol. V, chüan 19, f. 10a.

³⁸ Pêrlêê, Južnogobijskij spisok, p. 186.

not left out of consideration that the years indicated by him in the European calendar do not correspond to the years of the 60-year cycle mentioned in the same colophon, together with the date of the rule of Törü Gereltü. The year 1835 is a "female-wood-blue (sheep) year" (eme modun[kökegčin] qoni)³⁹ and in the colophon the "male-wood-blue horse year" (ere modun [köke] morin jil) is mentioned,⁴⁰ which corresponds to the year 1834. The year 1838 has the Mongolian name ere siroi (sira) noqai "male-earth-(yellow)-dog" and in the colophon we read [eme yal (ulayayčin)] takiya jil "[male-fire-(red)] hen year" which corresponds to the year 1837. Besides the years we have the following indications of the time of the composition:

In the Mongolian text:

- 1) Beginning: $\check{c}a\gamma an \, sara-yin \, (\dots)^{43}$ $e\check{c}e\dots$ "from (the day?) of the first month..."
- 2) Ending: tabun sara-yin sayin (...)⁴⁵ edür-e "on the prosperous day of the fifth month".

Corresponding date in the European calendar:

One of the thirty days from the 9th February till the 9th of March (1834) according the work of Hoang.⁴⁴

One of the thirty days from the 3rd June till the 2rd July (of 1837) according to the work of Hoang.⁴⁶

On the basis of the foregoing we have to conclude that according to the data contained in the South-Gobi version of the *Bolor toli* the composition of the work commenced on one of the days between the 9th of February and the 9th of March, 1834, and it was finished on one of the days between the 3rd of June and 2nd of July, 1837.

As can be seen from the above statement the dates of the composition, the years 1834—1837 indicated on the basis of Bolor toli I, are the same as those based on the text of Bolor toli II. Further, the narrower space of time within the interval of a month between the 9th of February and 9th March coincides in both versions. Finally the time of the conclusion of the composition is in both versions indicated as being in the fifth month of the year. I would call attention to the fact that in Bolor toli I this date is given more precisely, the prosperous day of the first decade of the fifth month, is mentioned that is, the interval between the 3rd June and the 12th June, 1837, while in Bolor toli II only the prosperous day of the fifth month is given, which corresponds to a greater interval lasting from the 3rd June till the 2nd July.

³⁹ Table of A. M. Pozdneev.

⁴⁰ Pêrlêê, Južnogobijskij spisok, p. 186.

⁴¹ Table of A. M. Pozdneev.

⁴² Pêrlêê, Južnogobijskij spisok, p. 186.

⁴³ On the dots and round brackets, cf. note 32.

⁴⁴ P. Hoang, p. 336, cf. Chen Yüan vol. V, chüan 19, f. 10a.

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