

# The Black Book of the Holy Chingis Khan: Remarks on a 19th Century Mongolian Folklore Source

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# The Black Book of the Holy Chingis Khan: Remarks on a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Mongolian Folklore Source

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## Abstract

BÁLINT Gábor (1844–1913) the gifted researcher of Mongolian, Turkic and also other (Caucasian, Tamil, etc.) languages carried out his first long lasting fieldwork between 1871 and 1874 and recorded numerous texts concerning the oral tradition among others of the Kalmyks and the Khalkhas. His achievements are only partly published and there are three unedited manuscripts kept in the Archive of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The author of the present lines is currently working on the critical edition of these texts that are valuable as linguistic material (reflecting the pronunciation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Kalmyk and Khalkha idioms) and also very unique concerning their content.

Among the Khalkha records there is a text entitled *Činggis bogdo xānē xara depterēn dotorās yaryakson uge* (Khalkha *Čingis bogd xānī xar dewtrēs gargasan üg*) “Saying taken from the Black Book of the Holy Chingis Khan” containing a story how Chingis Khan’s legacy was divided among his sons. Though, according to our present information, this text has been preserved only in BÁLINT’s manuscript, further research might discover parallels or reveal some obscure passages of it. A Buddhist monk, Yondon jamc, the main informant of BÁLINT during his stay in Urgha dictated the text that deserves to be investigated not only as a source of aetiological mythology but also as a manifestation of 19<sup>th</sup> century historical views on Chingisid legacy. As the translation will be issued together with BÁLINT’s whole Khalkha material, here in the present article I intend to concentrate on the motifs concerning the inheritance of Chingisid sovereignty and rulers’ insignia.

Keywords: Mongolian Empire, Chingis Khan, historiography, folklore, legacy, khan’s insignia, Buddhism

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## 1. Introductory remarks

While working on the unpublished<sup>(1)</sup> texts of Kalmyk and Khalkha collections of the notable Hungarian researcher of numerous Eurasian languages whose extremist ideas on language affinity, however, generate much controversy, Gábor Bálint of Szentkatolna (in Hungarian Szentkatolnai Bálint Gábor, hereafter Bálint), I discovered a unique text devoted to the division of his legacy and power insignia among his four sons by Chingis Khan, the founder of the Great Mongolian Empire. The text includes ten pages and was recorded from his Lama-master, Yondonjamc by Bálint during his research journey in Urga in 1873. During the period of this first field research trip (1871–1874) he spent several months among the Kazan Tatars, the Kalmyks, shortly visited the Buriats around Lake Baikal and spent 155 days among the Mongols on the territory of present-day Mongolia. In my previous studies I have surveyed the events of Bálint's life significant for understanding the recorded materials (Birtalan 2009: X–XI with further bibliography) besides all the academic and popular publications devoted to any area of Bálint's research (E. g. Berta 1988, Kara 1962, Kara 1973, Zágoni 2005). Here I would like to review only some major facts that concern his activity among the Eastern Mongols – as he called the population of the contemporary territory of that time Outer Mongolia – and his main informant, his tutor of the Khalkha language, Lama Yondonjamc. Bálint recorded numerous texts including various folklore genres (folk songs, tales, proverbs), etudes of folk life (pastoral nomadism) and Buddhist ritual practice (e. g. Buddhicised scapulimancy, fragments of prayers) from his Lama-master and partly also from other informants. The detailed elaboration of his East-Mongolian text collection is in process and is planned to be ended during 2012.

## 2. Gábor Bálint of Szentkatolna's research journey

Similarly to the famous founder of Tibetology, Alexander Csoma de Kőrös (in Hungarian Kőrösi Csoma Sándor 1784–1842) Bálint was born in a Transylvanian Sekel (Hungarian *székely*) family (born 1844 Transylvania, in the village Szentkatolna, near present day Kézdivásárhely [today Târgu Secuiesc] – died 1913 Transylvania, Temesvár [today Timișoara]), and was deeply affected by the root-seeking movements of the Hungarian people of 19<sup>th</sup> century. This motivation determined the life of the young lad talented in learning languages. Although he studied law, he tried to master as many languages as many teachers he was able to find (and even without the supervision of teachers). His endeavours were discovered by some leading specialists of Hungarian and Oriental philology in Hungary, such as the Turkologist Ármin Vámbéry (1832–1913) or János Fogarasi (1801–1878), one of the compilers of the *Dictionary of the Hungarian Language*.<sup>(2)</sup> On the recommendation of his patrons he was offered to carry out a long lasting field research for the purpose of studying the living idioms of the Altaic and related languages, first of all Mongolic languages.

Bálint's research journey to Turkic and Mongolic speaking peoples of Russia and further to Mongolia began in the summer of 1871 and he arrived back to Hungary in the winter of 1874. Shortly after his arrival he delivered a detailed report on his achievements at the session of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (2<sup>nd</sup> March 1874). The written version of his account that includes not only a summary of the events of his field trip, but informs the reader of his working methodology, was published in 1875 (Bálint 1875, Kara 1973). It is worth mentioning that other leading personalities of Mongolian studies (A. Pozdnejev, G. J. Ramstedt) approached later the spoken idioms and recorded folklore texts in a similar way to Bálint.<sup>(3)</sup> His methods tested among the Christianised Kazan Tatars (Berta 1988) worked smoothly among the Kalmyks and to a certain extent among the Khalkhas. I summarised with a detailed bibliography the available information on Bálint's Kalmyk research in the Introduction to the *Romanized Grammar* (Birtalan 2009: XI–XIII). Here I refer only

to the events of his journey and studies among the Khalkhas. In May, when Bálint left Astrakhan – the main residence of his Kalmyk research – he travelled to Saint Petersburg to meet some leading Orientalists of the Russian academic life such as A. F. Schiefner (1817–1879), who became the supporter of Bálint’s efforts in learning spoken idioms and preparing grammars of vernacular languages, too (Birtalan 2009: 4). But as is revealed by the notes in his diary and his official and personal letters to his patron Fogarasi, he did not wish to travel into innermost Asia to continue his research in Outer Mongolia.<sup>(4)</sup> He wanted to return to Hungary and work on his records on Kazan Tatar and Kalmyk in order to publish them with German translation. However, he suddenly changed his mind and reported to Fogarasi that he was ready to continue his research trip (cf. Bálint’s letter of 5 September 1872 in Kara 1973: 211–212): “I look forward to every day that I have to see the Chinese Mongols with my eyes.” (Kara 1973: 211).<sup>(5)</sup> The preparation took quite a long time while finally on the pressure of his patrons and with the financial support of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences he continued his journey to Mongolia on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1873 (Birtalan 2009: 4) to study the language(s) of the Eastern Mongols, primarily the Khalkhas. He vividly describes his long journey on a sledge through Russia and especially Russia’s Siberian part. Regrettably he did not write down in detail his experiences among the Buryats, but only superficially mentioned some events among them (Kara 1973: 156). He published a Buryat grammar in Hungarian on the basis of a written Buryat grammar and a textbook and not of the spoken idiom (Bálint 1877, in detail cf. Birtalan 2009: XVII–XVIII). He arrived in Urgha (Mong. Yeke Kūriyen, today Ulānbātar) in April 1873. It is important to note that he preferred to master the vernacular as a new working method to the one followed among the Tartars and the Kalmyks and did not focus on an educational institution in the capital city of Mongolia. He chose a language tutor, who then became his main informant, too. Lama Yondonjamc (in Bálint’s transcription Yanden Dsamcza) was “... a Khara<sup>(6)</sup> lama (a Mongolian married clergyman), who had wandered in several parts of Mongolia ...” (Birtalan 2009: XIV). Bálint recorded vocabulary and sentence-types, and mastering the Kalmyk language he learned the Khalkha vernacular without any problems and also started to record folklore materials. As he reported in his account he transcribed I. J. Schmidt’s written *Geser epic* variant into spoken Khalkha (Birtalan 2009: XIV–XV). He says about it the following: “During 155 days I did nothing else than writing down phonetically all things my lama or other persons called by him to me were able to dictate to me. I read the whole fable of Geser Khān with my lama and transcribed it in the spoken language. I must remark that my lama was no literator [sic!] but cleverer [sic!] and more experienced than many of the learned ones.” (Birtalan 2009: XV–XVI). Although it is not significant from the point of view of the present article, it can be mentioned that Bálint spent his time in Urgha not only learning Khalkha, but he studied some Chakhar (Čaxar) and also Manchu (Birtalan 2009: XV).

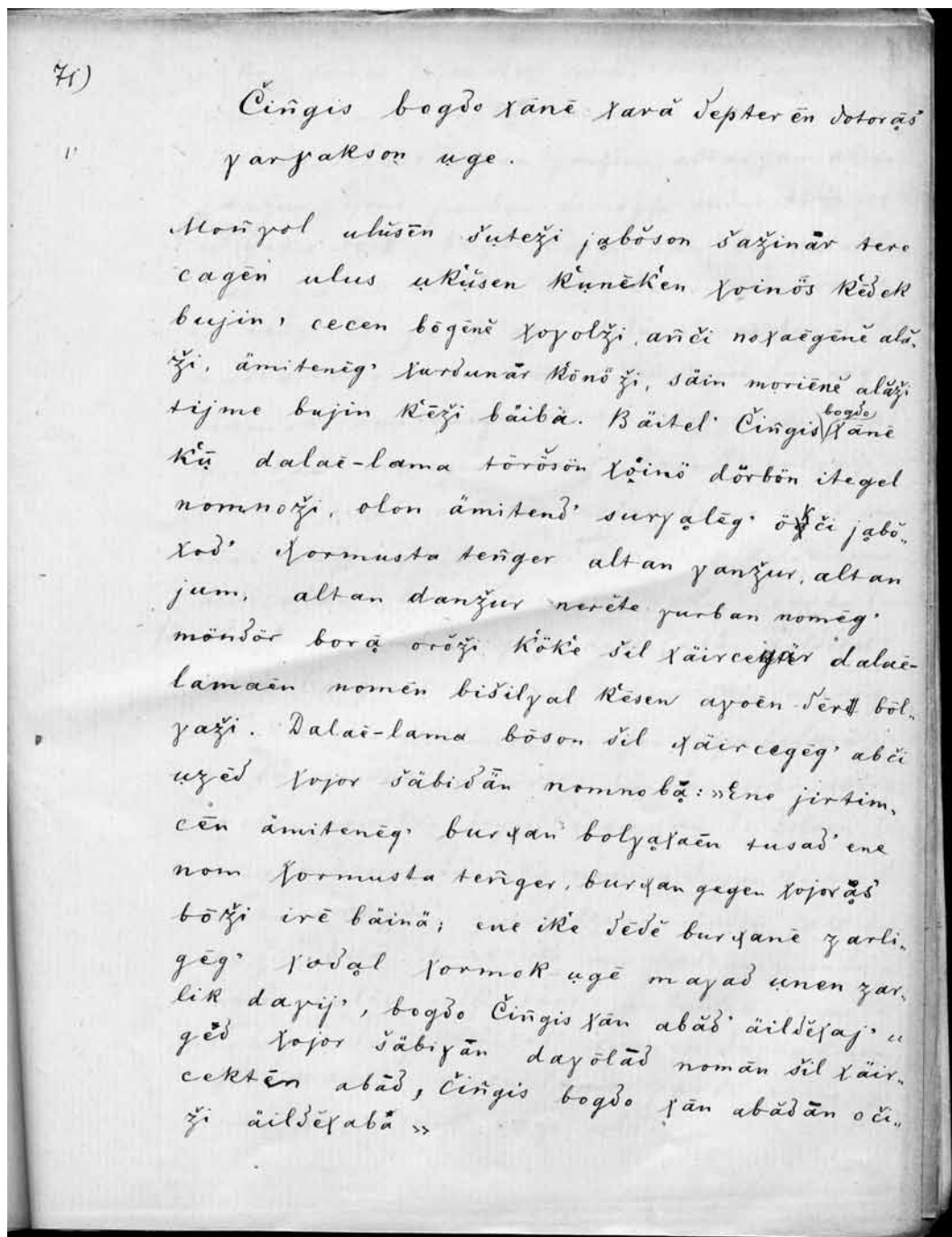
The result of his research in Urgha is the manuscript of Khalkha folklore materials and sample texts of the vernacular language.<sup>(7)</sup> Some features of the texts show Western Khalkha phonetic characteristics (Kara 1962: 163).

### 3. The text

The text is entitled *Činggis bogdo xānē xara depterēn dotorās yaryakson uge* (Khalkha *Čingis bogd xānī xar dewtrēs*<sup>(8)</sup> *gargasān üg*)<sup>(9)</sup> “Saying taken<sup>(10)</sup> from the Black Book of the Holy Chingis Khan”.

#### 3.1. The genre and the motifs

Bálint wrote the following remarks on the text into the Preface of his *Romanized Grammar*: “As for the tradition, I could get no more than an extract from the Black book of Tshingis Khān, which my lama dictated



Picture 1 The first page (p. 71) from Bálint's manuscript of the *Black Book of the Holy Chingis Khan*.

me from memory. As I could not give this piece without increasing too much the size of present work, I will mention its chief contents in order to show how cunningly the lamas have brought the inextirpable national feelings for the great Khān Tshingis into consistency with Buddhism, or better Lamaism.” (Birtalan 2009: 5). Bálint himself considered this text particular, because he summarised its content on the pages of his preface (Birtalan 2009: 5–7).

The text deserves interest from numerous points of views indeed and has numerous values. Concerning its genre it can be identified as an oral narrative, motifs of which can be traced back to several written source types (cf. below). The question whether Lama Yondonjamc owed a written original in the form of a book[let] (Khal. *dewter*) or not remains unsolved. But as Bálint stated (cf. above) the Lama dictated the text to him. The practice of setting in writing the orally performed texts was widespread during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (cf. the numerous sacred and also lay texts, tales and other narratives in any catalogue of Mongolian manuscripts and xylographs), which makes it possible that this record had a written version too. The title “booklet, book” refers to the presence of such an original as well, nonetheless, I have not discovered any similar or close version to it. The fact that the Lama told the text is obvious, not only from Bálint’s statement, but from the fact that it reflects the pronunciation (in some respects of a Western Khalkha dialect).

With regard to its subject matter the short text includes two major themes:

1. The distribution of the territory of the empire and rulers’ insignia by Chingis Khan himself among his four sons.
2. The origin of Buddhism among the Mongols.

In order to determine the present text I tried to find some correspondence with the *suryal* (Mong., cf. Khal. *surgāl*) and the *bilig*-literature (Mong., Khal. *bilig*), the ethic-moral wise sayings – targeted not only to a ruler but also to a larger audience – ascribed either to Chingis Khan himself or to any of his advisers, members of his suite. Nevertheless the *surgāl*- and *bilig*-texts at my disposal do not show exact equivalences (Rachewiltz 1984, Okada 1995, Jahontova 1994, 2001 with further references). The last passage of the text includes a prophecy on the future of the Mongols, on the decline of the social spheres (political and religious areas, economy) and to a lesser extent of the natural environment. The political and religious prophecies generally contain apocalyptic depictions of the future with means of hyperbolic expressions. The prophecy included in the *Black Book of the Holy Chingis Khan* is less extreme in this respect. There are no mentions of the apocalyptic end of the world, of natural calamities caused by water and fire. The prophecy is revealed by Chingis Khan himself and as it is usual in the Mongolian prophetic literature (the Mong. *vivangirid*, Skr. *vyākṛta*, cf. Sárközi 1992: 7, 9) depicts the declining future. But in the present text the time of the universal collapse brings a rise for the Mongols through the foreign nation[s] governed by Chingis’ youngest son [and his descendants] who presided over the westernmost territory of the empire. Here I include the translation of the prophetic passage of the text (part of the original text cf. Picture 2.)

“[p. 78.] Spread my saying to many [people]; these are my word[s]: When the apocalypse comes (Bálint *cak cub[-jon bolxod]*), the mind and views of the Mongol nation (Bálint *mongyol izayurtonē*) will become clouded (Bálint *uxān sanāne mungxok bolxo*), they will become unable (Bálint *čadel ugē bolxo*); the wheat and rice of that time people will not grow (Bálint *tāriē būda yarxugē bolxo*); the horned cattle will become cow (Bálint *ukūr mal unēd oroxo*);<sup>(11)</sup> the nobles will not know their duties (Bálint *noyin k’un kerek medek’ugē bolna*); there will not be any rain, there will be a *jud*-disaster (Bálint *xora borā oroxugē bolxo, jot bolxo*), there will not grow any [more] trees and grass on the mountain (Bálint *ōland modo öböso uryuxugē bolxo*); the [flow] of the Ganga river will stop (Bálint *Γangya muren tasorxo bolxo*); the assembly of monks will not learn the teaching (Bálint *xobarik k’un erdem bilik ujek’ugē bolxo*); the lay people and the officials will not know the law (Bálint *xara k’un, tušimel, säid xaöli medek’ugē bolxo*); the monks of *geleng* rank will get married (Bálint

78)

Činē sanāson sanā Tenđerēn sanāson sanāte üdeli  
 Ken butunā; butube-üg' sanāyāran dāinēg' darā,  
 ži bold-ugē; zerge žemsegēg' bek'ilen abči,  
 erdeniēn cayan toqēg' bijend' šuteži, šān ugē  
 yazar šān sōži, albatē olon šorā mešē cerektān  
 minē ögšön minyan erdenitē almusēn sukēg'  
 takūži, olon cerektēgān zalberūži, šān šorōēn  
 albatē ergenēg' cerēgēn josār žakīran abči  
 šendān žirpaži, kēdō (čaktā <sup>kēdō</sup> cerek dāisen 'ma,  
 yad-ugēn tolta, čamād' tere žemsek tušičāba;  
 minē ene kēlēsēnēg' olonāran tarāži abči;  
 minē uge ene: cak cub on bolxoš' moijol izāyur,  
 šonē ušān sanāne munžok bolxo, čadel ugē bol-  
 xo; tere eagēn ulūsēn tāriē būda yaruugē bol-  
 xo; ukūš mal unēš' orōxo, nojin kün kērekme,  
 šēkūgē bolno; šorā borā orōxugē bolxo; žos  
 bolxo; olā <sup>modō</sup> modōš' ošōš' uryuugē bolxo, yarıya  
 muren ašor xo bolxo; šobārik kün erdem bilik  
 uže kūgē bolxo; šarā kün, tušimel, säid šaoli  
 mešē kūgē bolxo; geleš kün ekēner abča bolxo;  
 žilya buquš' šurul bolxo; urēn šarān xoš'  
 kēriē šōyor xo bolxo; ekēner-kün šorō bāriš'  
 bolxo; nošāē morišik (moričilaži) šēkē; tere  
 čaktā žyalar šunšāižien albatē ergen moijol  
 izāyurtonē sanā nēgen nēlčē;

Picture 2 The prophecy on the future (p. 78) from Bálint's manuscript

*geleng k'un ek'ener abxa bolxo*); there will be [in] all the canyons a monastery (*Bálint jilya bugud xurul bolxo*); the crow will croak in the darkness of the dawn (*Bálint ur'ën xarangxo'ed k'eri'ë döyörxo bolxo*);<sup>(12)</sup> the women will govern the state (*Bálint ek'ener-k'un törö b'ärix bolxo*); the dog will urinate as the horse (*Bálint noxa'ë mori'šik (mori'čilaji) š'ek'ë*); that time the views of *Ĵalar xungtäij*'s dependants [and] of peoples having Mongolian lineage will unite (*Bálint tere cakta Ĵalar xungtäij'ien albate ergen mongyol ijayurton'ë sanā n'ëgen n'ilek'ë*). [p. 79.] [They together] will occupy the entire world (*Bálint Xamok yajar'ën k'emeji'ëg abolcoxo bolxo*)."<sup>(13)</sup> Another motif in the *Black Book of the Holy Chingis Khan* that can be connected to the prophetic literature is the phenomenon of objects descending from the heaven or above world. The god, here Xormusta tengger (Mong. Qormusda, Iranian Ahura Mazdā),<sup>(14)</sup> interfere with the formation of the Mongolian empire by sending a blue box down from the Above Realm of the Gods that contains important scriptures of Buddhism, namely the Canon: the *Ganjur* (Tib. *bka'-gyur*) and the *Danjur* (Tib. *bstan-gyur*) and the *Yum* – actually the second part *Ganjur*, but here mentioned also separately.

Summarising shortly the prophetic passage of the text, the following can be concluded. The well-known written prophetic literature influenced the oral tradition<sup>(15)</sup> as well, and with some modifications was spread among people. The prophecy in our text is not of unearthly origin, it comes from Chingis Khan. The passage describes the future with means usual in prophetic literature, but ends with a prophecy about the rise of the Mongols with the help of a foreign nation who were heretics (Mong., Khal. *ters*) before and were governed by Chingis' taboo-breaker son (in details cf. below).

Returning to the discussion of the *Black Book of the Holy Chingis Khan*, the main body of its text is "a set of instructions" to his four sons given by Chingis himself how to rule their realms, what their major task would be after the territorial distribution of the empire, in which part of the empire they should seize the governance and which rulers' insignia they will own to fulfil their father's will. The text lays emphasis on the origin and the crucial role of the Buddhist religion, i. e. the Yellow Faith ascribing its beginning to Chingis Khan and particularly to one of his sons. The concept of the "*qoyar yosun*" appears in the text, too and both the secular and religious powers are legitimised by transcendental powers.

### 3.2. The main motifs of the narrative

I. Description of the differences between the burial customs of shamanism and Buddhism (this passage offers a kind of an introduction to the origin of Buddhism among the Mongols, and how the Buddhist ceremonies replace the animal sacrifices).

II. A prophecy is given to Chingis Khan from the Buddhist transcendental world layer, i. e. the above world by Khormusda.

III. The transcendental world layer transmits the Buddhist Canonical scripts to Chingis' eldest son, called in the texts as Dalai Lama.

IV. Chingis Khan distributes his legacy among three of his four sons.

V. Chingis Khan wants to transfer both the lay and religious rules into the hand of his eldest son.

VI. Chingis' eldest son refuses to rule over the religious and lay spheres, he undertakes only the religious power; this son of Chingis appears as [one reincarnation of] the Dalai Lama.

VII. Chingis Khan distributes the empire's territory and some rulers' insignia among his three sons.

VIII. Chingis Khan's fourth son behaves himself improperly (he breaks a behavioural taboo by sitting in an improper way), for this reason he receives the most difficult task, i. e. to rule over the heretics [followers of other creeds than Buddhism].

IX. Chingis Khan's youngest son receives further ruler's insignia.

X. Chingis' teaching (with the poetic means of an epic hyperbole) on how to rule over various people



and territories, and how to become the Great Khan of the whole empire.

XI. Chingis provides a prophecy on the decline of political, economic and religious spheres but also the rise of the Mongols with the help of the people being formerly heretics.

The above chain of motifs of the narrative offers several various possibilities of analysis; I chose three approaches to interpret particular motifs namely:

1. The historical value of the narrative,
2. The problem of the “making of a khan”,
3. The role of the khan’s insignia.

### 3.3. The historical value of the narrative

Folklore texts – with the necessary restrictions – might be utilised for drawing conclusions on some passages of history. Such an example is discussed by Walther Heissig in his article devoted to the formation of tribal alliances as it is reflected in the Mongolian heroic epics. (Heissig 1985). Erika Taube studying the historical importance of folklore texts pointed out in her article that some motives, some phenomena might be preserved only in folklore texts or the folklore texts might help to interpret parts of historical records. (Taube 1999). Taube concentrated on the motifs in folklore texts of ethnic groups not owing written systems (e. g. the Tuwas), but her statements might be applied to the oral tradition of people having a written system, too. The present text is – without doubt – an ahistorical narrative. The anachronistic motifs of the plot are combined with the historically established tradition of the inheritance of Chingis’ legacy among his sons and the religious views of a clergyman (Yomdonjamc) in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The text includes at least the following historical phenomena:

1. The fact of the distribution of power among the four sons of Chingis Khan.
2. The reminiscences of the historical tradition that one of Chingis’ sons was treated separately (cf. Joči’s doubtful descendance).
3. The importance of various Khan’s insignia.
4. The reminiscences of the distribution of power into lay and religious spheres (*qoyar yosun*).
5. The historical topicality of the Mongols’ self-identification in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: how the Mongols tried to identify themselves in the historical situation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the dreams of the reestablishment of a Great Empire became dissolved, or what was preserved from the historical reality of the glorious past.
6. The importance of the Yellow Faith among the Mongols in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century – in the interpretation of a clergyman – and the presence of shamanic phenomena (animal sacrifices).

The above phenomena will be discussed around two main problems: the making of a khan and the ruler’s insignia.

### 3.4. Chingis Khan’s legacy – The making of the Khan

The majority of information – which the *Black Book of the Holy Chingis Khan* provides – concerns the nature of the ruling khan’s power. The way it is demonstrated in the present narrative corresponds to the phenomena surveyed by Denis Sinor on the basis of historical sources and to some extent also of some folklore genres in his article devoted to the problem of “making of a Great Khan” among Inner Asian people (Sinor 1993). Before discussing Chingis Khan’s legacy as it is represented in the *Black Book*, it is inevitable to demonstrate some evidence from historical sources concerning the division of the inheritance among Chingis Khan’s sons. The §§ 254–255 of *The Secret History of the Mongols* preserved the episode how Chingis Khan intended to transmit the sovereignty over the entire empire (Rachewiltz 2004: 922–937, Vladimircov 2002:

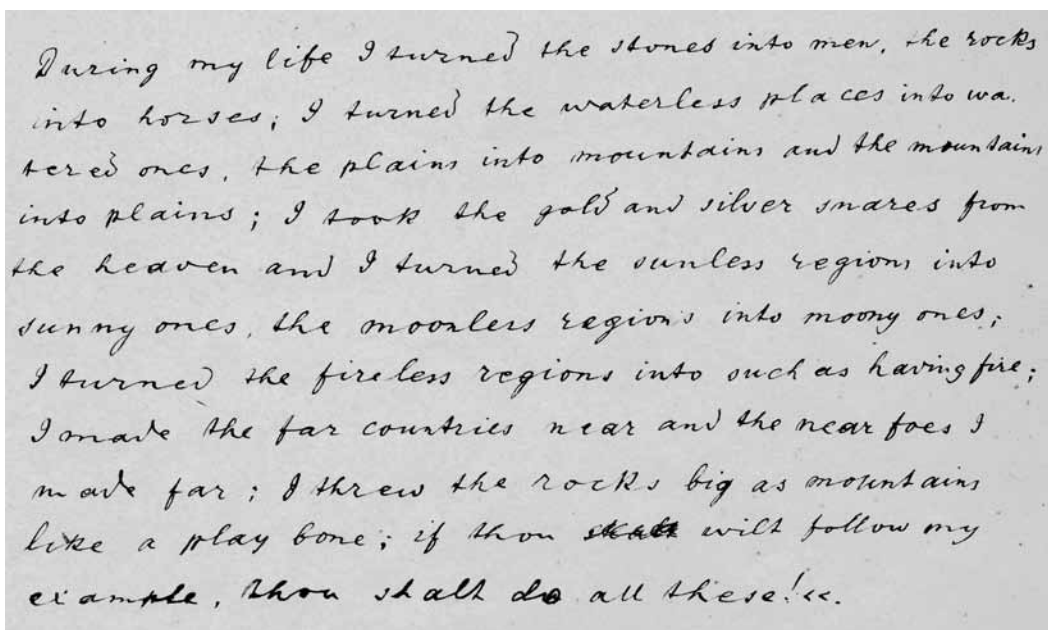
198–201, Pürewjaw 2004: 7). In *The Secret History* rather their behaviour and talk than the Khan himself make a decision about the inheritance among his four sons. In the *Black Book* the decision is governed by fate, cf. the intervening of the supernatural world and the improper behaviour of the youngest son in front of his father – this latter can also be comprehended as a kind of a destined deed. In Juvaini's chronicle the main characteristics of the four sons, the “four pillars” of the empire are given in detail. The process of the inheritance of the sovereignty and the territorial division of the empire among the four sons is also elaborately depicted with the help of various teachings (Mong. *suryal*) in the form of similes (Boyle 1958: 40–44). The 13<sup>th</sup> century historical sources with their later reflections in the 17–19<sup>th</sup> century chronicles and the 19<sup>th</sup> century oral tradition has some correspondence. It cannot be excluded that the model of the present narrative was some passage of *The Secret History* or later historical writings in some respects.

According to our text Chingis Khan passed down his legacy first to his three elder sons: “[p. 73.] Ordered [as follows] one by one to his three sons” (Bálint *yurban k'ūd tus tustān jarlik bolba*, Khal. *gurwan xūdē tus tustān jarlig bolow*). The lexeme used for the instruction is the [Khan's] “giving an order” (Bálint, Khal. *jarlig bol-*). Chingis' eldest son called in the text Doin Ĵamca dalai lama, was ordered to govern Tibet (Bálint *Tubutēn xān sō*, Khal. *Tōwdin xān sū*), and to become the supervisor of religious affairs. He – as the head of religious matters – received the “yellow Banner”, the *šara toy* (Khal. *šar tug*) from among the ruler's insignia. The prototype of the eldest son embodies an ideal *cakravartin*-like leader and refers to Chingis' later descendants, who were the protectors of Buddhism, such as Altan Khan, Ligdan Khan, and were involved in Tibet-policy. Even some of the Oirat rulers (?) who were forceful politicians concerning the Tibet-affairs, might be examples of this character and also the prominent heads of the Mongolian Buddhist Church, as the Ĵebjundambas (?) could serve as model for creating such a figure.<sup>(16)</sup>

Chingis' second son called Čin-täiji described as the middle one among the sons (Bálint *dondok' k'ū*, Khal. *dundax xū*) was ordered to rule over the Manchus (Bálint *Manjuēn xān sō*, Khal. *Manjin xān sū*). He inherited the “blue banner” *k'öke toy* (Khal. *xōx tug*) from among the ruler's insignia. This figure might represent Chingis' successor Ögödei, the second Great Khan. The tradition of the legacy of the sovereignty over the entire empire is preserved in this figure, and in accordance to *The Secret History* it refers to Ögödei. This concept is supported by the following statement of Chingis' eldest son: [p. 73.] *bi šajinē čin' sakiy, törān dondo k'ügār sak'iöl* (Khal. *bi šašnig/šajnig čin' saxi, törō dundax xūgēr[e] saxiul*) “I will protect your religion, and make your middle son protect the state”. How to rule and what makes a great khan is described in a pathetic order given to the second son [p. 77.]. The deeds of the protagonists of heroic epics can be paralleled with the hyperbolic expressions how Chingis portrays himself as a great ruler whose example must be followed if one wishes to become a worthy successor of his legacy. This passage attracted Bálint's attention and he translated it for the preface to his *Grammar* completely (Birtalan 2009: 7). Cf. Picture 3.

Chingis' third son called Xung-täiji was ordered to become the ruler over the Oirats (called in the text as Ölöts, Bálint *ölotēn xān sū*, Khal. *öldin xān sū*) and inherited the “red flag” *ulān toy* (Khal. *ulān tug*) from among the ruler's insignia. It is also questionable who the prototype of this character was. A historical person who was supposed to rule the Western-Mongols might be Chingis Khan's second son, Chagadai who inherited parts of the territory of the later Oirat dominancy or a later Chingisid descendant who occupied the Oirats' area. It is hard to say judging only on the basis of the present text.

Chingis' youngest son, Ĵalar<sup>(17)</sup> xung-täiji appears separately from his three elder brothers; as he is a breaker of taboos (Khal. *cēr*) – he was sitting in an improper way in front of his father – he is treated separately (Bálint *otxon k'ū /mō sōdalār sōji*, Khal. *otgon xū /mū sūdlār sūj/*) (on the breaking of taboos cf. Dulam 2009). In all probability the prototype of this figure was Chingis' eldest son, Ĵoči, whose descent is claimed to be suspicious, and whose detachment from his other three brothers (Cf. the §§ 254–255 of *The Secret History*



Picture 3 A fragment from Bálint's English translation prepared for the Introduction of the *Romanized Grammar*: the hyperbolic depiction of the Great Khan's deeds (cf. Birtalan 2009: 7)

of the Mongols) is represented this way in the present text (Cf. Canjid 2010). The fourth son inherited the westernmost domain of the empire and the hard task of ruling over the “heretics” i. e. “[p. 74. people] with false doctrine” (Bálint *terse borō nomtan*, Khal. *ters burū nomton*, and Bálint *či tersiūdēn xān sōji*, Khal. *či tersūdīn xān sūji*). Though the character in Bálint's record is declared as the youngest among the sons, he similarly to Joči, is ordered to become the ruler over the people and territory of the Russian empire (Bálint *Či odā orosēn xān sō, yabon sōson jayā čin' xolo yaboxo bilā*, Khal. *Či odō orosīn xān sū, yawgan sūsan jayā čin' xol yawax bilē*. “[p. 75] Now become the Khan of Russia. As you were sitting squatting, your destiny is to go far away.”<sup>(18)</sup> He inherited the “white flag with eight legs” *nāiman kōlte cagān tok* (Khal. *naiman xōlt cagān tug*) from among the ruler's insignia. The youngest son (Cf. Kradin – Skrynnikova 2006: 355–374) and his descendants will receive significant roles in the later future and in the time of apocalyptic decline they will restore the Mongols' rule with the help of people called heretics (cf. above in the discussion of the prophetic passage in the text). This passage can be comprehended as a 19<sup>th</sup> century revelation of the contemporary and later Russian influence.

Concerning the names of Chingis' four sons, non of them appear with his own name they are called by titles with the basic component of *tayiji*, “prince” that refers to their Chingisid descentance – except on the title of the Dalai Lama. The identification of the prototypes of particular characters with the help of their titles needs further research.

### 3.5. The rulers' insignia – “the objectified power”

Discussing the nomadic ruler's role and its legitimation as it is reflected in the *Dāftār-i Cingis namā*, Mária Ivanics refers to the material setting of legitimate power, examining each object that appeared in the Turco-Mongolian historical tradition as ruler's insignia. (Ivanics 2007: 115–148). She prepared the list of all

possible insignia of the Khan on the basis of the inner and foreign sources of the Turko-Mongolian world (the list of sources and elaborative works cf. Ivanics 2007: 115–148). The insignia in the *Black Book of the Holy Chingis Khan* do not correspond with the insignia mentioned in the historical sources, only the banner and the seal (Cf. also Sagaster – Bischoff 1989) appear in Bálint's text as a significant object of seizing power and ruling over an empire. In addition, the headgear gained an important role among the symbols of the Khan's sovereignty in the *Däftār-i Cingis namā* (Ivanics 2007: 142 and passim) and in Bálint's record, too.

The *Black book of the Holy Chingis Khan* lays a great emphasis on the ruler's insignia: Chingis Khan bequeathed object(s) of sovereignty to each of his sons. The most important items are the banners (Mong. *tuy*) of various colours (cf. above): the text mentions four banners (Mong. *tuy*) for Chingis' four sons: yellow, blue, red and white (on the *sülde* and *tuy* cf. Birtalan 2001: 1042–1043 with further literature). It is noteworthy that the black banner is not mentioned as an object inherited by any of Chingis' sons. One might suppose that the colours refer partly on the colour symbolism of Inner and East Asian people appearing in the Mongolian chronicle literature, however this assumption needs further investigation.<sup>(19)</sup>

### 3.6. Further insignia of power

The taboo-breaker youngest son inherited the highest number of insignia, as, “[p. 74. the Khan] gave his round seal [for] occupying the four [world]continents” (Bálint *dörbön töbög ejlesen toyorik tamayān ögbö*, Khal. *dörwön tiwīg ejelsen dugarig tamgān ögöw*), “[p. 74. the Khan] gave his round hat” (Bálint *bu tō (toyorik) malayaēyān ögbö*, Khal. *bu (?) tō (dugarig) malgaigā ögöw*), “[p. 74. the Khan] gave his diamond axe owing a thousand magic powers” (Bálint *erdemēn mingyan šidite Almusēn sukān ögbö*, Khal. *erdemīn myangan šidite almasīn süxē n' ögöw*).

The Khan's seal called here as “the round seal [for] occupying the four continents” is the most important object and symbol of power, which itself can represent the rule over the empire. The phraseology for the seal is Mong. *tamay-a*, Khal. *tamga* and originally denotes the “burned mark on livestock” and later received the meaning of the seal. Ivanics discusses in detail the “burned mark” as power insignia among the Turko-Mongolian rulers. The lexeme *tamga* appears once more in the narrative namely as sign of the territory to be governed by Chingis' third son: “[p. 76.] Xung-täiji, there is my sign engraved into a rock that belong to [our?] clan; go there and become the khan of the Ölöts” (Bálint *xung-täiji ijayurtan xadand sēlsen minē tamya bī; tende očij Ölötēn xān sō*, Khal. *xun-taij yajgūrtan xandand silsen mini tamga bī; tend očij öldin xān sū*).

The headgear and the belt are surveyed as two insignia belonging together in the Mongolian material by Skrynnikova and in the Turko-Mongolian tradition by Ivanics (2007: 145). In the *Black Book* the headgear is designated as the “round cap”; the lexeme *toyorik* “round” is given in brackets as an explanation to its previous expression: *bu tō* that needs further investigation. The ruler's headgear appears in *The Secret History* as well: with regard to Ögödei's inheritance in the context of an investiture: the future great khan should learn among other things the teaching of the hat, i. e. “The great array of the teaching's hat”. (Rachewiltz 2004: 932).<sup>(20)</sup>

The third object Chingis offered to his youngest son is an axe labelled as a “diamond axe owing thousand magic powers”. Other weapons, such as the quiver, arrow and bow appear in the role of power and ruler's insignia in most sources of the Turko-Mongolian tradition, but the axe is rather an epic motif in tales and heroic epics. Chingis gives instruction on the use of the axe: *činē xaršildax dāisenög [...]*<sup>(21)</sup> *toslon čadaxa mingyan erdemte Almusēn sukē*, Khal. *čini xaršildax daisnig tuslan čadax myangan erdemtei almasin süx*. “[p. 75] the diamond axe owing a thousand magic powers that is able to strike your opposing enemy”. In the mythico-epical genres the axe appears as an ordinary object e. g. given by the protagonist to the antagonist in exchange for a magical object, usually for a whip, with a ruse. E. g. that is what happened in the aetiological

mythology of the Mongols in the narrative of Buxa noyon the progenitor of the Western-Buriat Bulagat and Ekhirit clans who changed his ordinary axe for the magic whip of Erlig Khan, the ruler of the Underworld (in a variant: the whip of Goddess Lhamo) (Birtalan 2001: 954–955). Bálint translated the attribute attached to the lexeme as, “the well-hitting sorcerers’ axe”.

### 3.7. The Buddhist concept in the text

The *Black Book of the Holy Chingis Khan* was recorded from Lama Yondonjamc and although the main topic of the narration is the division of the territory of the empire and the power insignia among Chingis Khan’s sons, the whole text is imbued with the Buddhist concept of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Mongolian Buddhist clergy. According to the present narration when Buddhism appeared among the Mongols it replaced shamanism and banished some of its rituals, especially the bloody animal sacrifices carried out during the funeral customs (Cf. p. 71 of the *Black Book*). In our text Buddhism came to existence among the Mongols due to Chingis Khan’s eldest son’s Buddhist faithfulness, and the Buddhist Canon originates for the transcendental world as the prophetic objects well known in Buddhism (Sárközi 1992: passim): “[p. 74.] God Khormusda let down with hail and rain he three books of the Golden Kanjur, the Golden Tanjur and the Golden Yum in a blue glass box on the top of the cave where the Dalai Lama meditated.” (Bálint *Xormusta tengger altan yanjur, altan yum, altan danjur nerete yurban nomëg möndör borā oroji kök’e šil xäircagär dalaë-lamaën nomën bišilyal kësën ayoën dër bölyaji. Khal. Xurmast tenger altan ganjür, altan yum, altan danjür nertei gurwan nomig möndör borō orj xöx šil xaicagär dalai lamīn nomīn byasalgal xīsen aguīn dēr būlgaj.*). The eldest son is called Doin Jamca Dalai Lama; his Tibetan name Jamca is the Mongolian form of the Tib. *rgya mcho*, “sea, ocean” that refers to the title of the Dalai Lamas.<sup>(22)</sup> The identification of the Dalai Lamas with Chingis’ descendants is ahistoric, but it can be regarded as a means of legitimation of Buddhism on Mongolian earth and of the Mongolian Buddhist Church. Though it must be mentioned that the Buddhist concept is not represented in all passages and motifs of the text, it is omitted from the hyperbolic description of the Great Khans’ tasks. Further important Buddhist notion of the narrative is that Chingis Khan’s eldest son – as the prototype of the religious leaders – swore to liberate all the living beings during the present *kalpa* until Maitreya’s aeon comes.

## 4. Summary and follow up studies

The source entitled the *Black Book of the Holy Chingis Khan* recorded by Bálint Gábor in 1873 is a short narration on the distribution of the territory of the Great Empire and the ruler’s insignia among his four sons by Chingis Khan. The present paper serves as a preliminary survey of the most characteristic features concerning its genre, content and the historical and religious context with a short allusion to its 19<sup>th</sup> century political milieu. The informant, Lama Yondonjamc as a representative of the Mongolian Buddhist clergy favouring the glorious past and trying to elucidate the Mongols’ religious and political present and future told Bálint a narration which is ahistoric but has strongly legitimitative character concerning its historical motifs. The *Black Book* suggests that Buddhism has a solid basis among the Mongols, even the institution of the Dalai Lamas is connected to the 13<sup>th</sup> century events of the Great Mongolian Empire and personally to Chingis Khan, and that the Buddhist holy scriptures of the Canon descended from the transcendental above world – as the *gter-ma* literature of the prophecies – being revealed owing to the meditation of Chingis Khan’s son. This paper took into account the portrayal of the governance as Chingis bequeathed to his four sons and the representation of the khan’s power by means of epical hyperboles and ruler’s insignia.

*Chingis Khan’s Black book* is a part of Bálint’s Eastern Mongolian records, written in a transcription well

reflecting the features of a spoken idiom in many respects. The whole translation of the text with its linguistic context will be issued in 2012 together with all other items of Bálint Eastern Mongolian records in the series of the Oriental Collection of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, similarly to Bálint's *Romanized Grammar* (Birtalan 2009) and the Kalmyk texts (Birtalan 2011). Though the discussed text is a brief narration, it is worthy of scholarly attention as a unique source in many respects, of which only a few of the possible approaches were discussed above, and it is to be hoped that other students of Mongolian history and culture will find in it other aspects and values to be investigated.

### Notes

- (1) Three of Bálint's unpublished manuscripts concerning the Mongolian material are preserved in the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books of the Library of Hungarian Academy of Sciences:
  1. Nyugati mongol (Kálmik) szövegek. (184 pages), Nr.: M. Nyelvtud. 4/109; [Western Mongolian (Kalmyk) texts].
  2. Bálint Gábor: Keleti mongol (khalkha) szövegek. (88 pages), Nr.: Ms1379/2; [Bálint, Gábor: Eastern Mongolian (Khalkha) texts].
  3. A Romanized Grammar of the East- and West-Mongolian Languages. With popular Chrestomat[h]ies of both dialects. (222 pages), Nr.1: 81 szám, Nr.2: Ms 1379/1.
 Up to the present I have edited and published The *Romanized Grammar* (Birtalan 2009) and Kalmyk material (Birtalan 2011), the elaboration of the Khalkha text collection is in process (the estimated date of issuing the Khalkha material is 2012).
- (2) Apart from its deficiency the prominent but ideologically disputed *Dictionary* still offers a plethora of dialectal and vernacular lexemes to be studied (Czuczor – Fogarasi 1862 – 1874. Electronic version (CD-ROM) published in Budapest: Arcanum 2003).
- (3) Here I would like to refer to the recording of folk songs as the first step to collect further folklore material; Bálint mentioned it in his account and Pozdnejev and Ramstedt also recorded a large corpus of folk songs in order to become acquainted with the language and the ethnic culture of the Mongolian target groups they visited.
- (4) Cf. the letters written to Fogarasi after his arrival in Saint Petersburg. 17 June 1872 and 16 July 1872 (Kara 1973: 209–210).
- (5) The original Hungarian passage: “Mindennap tapasztalom, hogy a sinai mongolokat saját szememmel kell megnéznem.”
- (6) Mong. *qar-a*, Khalkha *xar* “black, laic, lay”.
- (7) A detailed list of the content cf. Kara 1962: 162.
- (8) Mong. *debter*, Khal. *dewter* “booklet, book”.
- (9) I use Bálint's simplified transcription and when it differs from contemporary Khalkha, in order that the reader could observe the peculiarities of the idiom Bálint's informant spoke, I add to it the Khalkha form as well (Khal.) and in some cases also the written Mongolian variant of particular lexemes (Mong.).
- (10) Bálint *yaryakson uge* (Khal. *gargasan üg*) lit. “words taken [from]”.
- (11) This syntagma is obscure; if there is a lapsus calami it is possible to be interpreted as: *uned oroxo*, khal. *ünd orox* “will be expensive” (?).
- (12) In details cf. Xürelbatar 2002: 97.
- (13) Parallels – though different from the motifs of our text – to the above phenomena of Mong. *čöb-ün čay* are in the prophecies elaborated by Sárközi. The prophecy issued in her book, ascribed to Chingis Khan and to religious leaders of Buddhism (*Boyda Bančin erdeni Dalai Blam-a-yin gegen boyda Činggis qayan narun jarliy-un bičig*) is not identical with Bálint's record (Sárközi 1992: 68–75).
- (14) On his role in the Mongolian Mythology, cf. Birtalan 2001: 1026.
- (15) Even if the *Black Book of the Holy Chingis Khan* was probably a written text originally, at the present stage of investigation it can be treated rather as an oral record.
- (16) The question marks mean a cautious hypothetical assumption, which might be solved with further parallel texts.
- (17) The clan of Jalayirs was a rivalling group of the Borjigin and after being defeated they became hereditary slaves of the ruling clan; some clan-members, as Muqali, played decisive role in the military and administrative life of the empire (Atwood 2004: 257–258 with further literature). The presence of this clan name in Chingis' youngest son's name emphasizes his detachment from his brothers.
- (18) Sitting squatting is tabooed among the Mongols. It must be avoided as it resembles on a defecating person and according to other views it means that the person is in hurry. “One may not squat [in the yurt]. It is sinful. Squatting means that the person is hurrying to war or pillage.” A Jaxčin taboo (*cēr*) from the materials of the Hungarian-Mongolian Joint Expedition (Aug. 1991, Xowd city).

- (19) Here I discuss only the connection to the 13<sup>th</sup> century power phenomena. The approach suggested by a referee of present article, namely to examine the motifs of the text in the context of the colour symbolism and insignia of the Manchu period, should be considered in a further, more elaborated investigation.
- (20) *Bara'a yeke maqalay-yin bauliya* "The 'teaching of the hat' clearly designates the instructions concerning authority, viz. governance – in other words, how to rule as a qan."
- (21) According to the context a lexeme is missing here: probably *Khal. yal-* "to defeat".
- (22) The other part of his name, Doin needs further investigation.

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