

Textual Analysis of the Extant Original of The Secret History of the Mongols

Abstract

The purpose of the present thesis is to analyze every aspect of textual nature present in the Chinese original of the Secret History of the Mongols.

The work consists of four chapters that touch issues such as the Chinese characters used for the transcription, their pronunciation and meaning, as well as invented or wrong characters. A list is presented with all the Mongolian syllables obtainable by means of the Chinese transcription system and with all the characters used for this. Subsequently, graphic aspects such as word division or punctuation are examined. The last chapter approaches the glossing system of the Mongolian text used in this work.

On the basis of the analysis of the collected data, some plausible assumptions about historical or linguistic issues are advanced, such as the ethnic identity of the author of the transcript or the author of the glosses, the existence of a Mongolian dialect with own characteristics in the Yuan dynasty environment, or the reason why this transcript was glossed, and whether it was done out of an original written in Uyghur script.

Keywords: textual analysis, Mongolian language, The Secret History of the Mongols, Yuan Dynasty