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MANUSCRIPTS AND SOUND RECORDS OF THE MONGOL-OIRAT HEROIC EPIC "JANGAR" IN THE ARCHIVES OF ST. PETERSBURG

The Mongol-Oirat Heroic Epic "Jangar", one of the outstanding monuments of the world literature, remarkable for the richness of its contents and the perfection of its artistic form, has been studied for more than two hundred years, the sources of this study being connected with St. Petersburg.

From St. Petersburg came those scholars — A. Bobrovnikov, K. Golstunsky, V. Kotvich, A. Pozdnev, and B. Vladimirtsov — who took notice of this epic and inspired interest towards it in Russia and in Europe. Later, when it became studied from the points of view of linguistics, history, and history of literature, there developed a distinct scientific branch — "Jangar" studies.

At present the archives of St. Petersburg have in their holdings manuscripts written in Old Mongol script, in Zaya-pandita script and in academic transcription, as well as material in Russian and sound records, representing mainly the initial stages of the study of this epic. The principal centres of Mongolian studies at the beginning of the twentieth century in St. Petersburg were the St. Petersburg University and the Asiatic Museum (later transformed into the Institute of Oriental Studies, at present the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies), therefore most of the material on "Jangar" was concentrated in these institutions.

In the course of the twentieth century Russian scientific institutions were re-organised several times, manuscripts were transferred from one place to another, their call numbers were changed. The result is that the information on these material found in scientific publications does not correspond to the real state of things. The aim of this article is to provide precise information on the present location of the manuscripts of "Jangar", both those studied or mentioned earlier as well as those so far never considered in scholarly publications.

In St. Petersburg is preserved the first record of the text of "Jangar", the one brought from Kalmykia by N. I. Mihaylov, fellow and member of the staff of the Russian Geographic Society. In 1855, this version was first translated into Russian and published in *Vestnik Russkogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva* (the Bulletin of the Russian Geographic Society), on the request of the ethnographic

section of the Society, by A. Bobrovnikov, Master of the Kazan Ecclesiastical Academy. In a critical review, which followed the translation, Bobrovnikov for the first time characterised "Jangar" as "an original, rare and veritably folk piece of literature" praising the idea of nomadic glory and the deeds of heroes, which is not recited but sung, accompanied by musical instruments [1].

Until recently the exact location of the said record remained unknown. In 1979, however, the Kalmyk scholar V. Tserenov discovered in the archives of the Russian Geographic Society the manuscript containing 1,800 versified lines, titled "Songs and Fairy-Tales of the Kalmyk People of the Astrakhan District, the Bagatsokhurov Ulus" [2]. It should be noted that he found there also one more manuscript, close by its contents to the first one.

After the publication of Bobrovnikov's translation scholars' interest towards the manuscript increased. In 1862, professor at the St. Petersburg University K. Golstunsky recorded several chapters from a Torgut *janjarčîn* in the Kalmyk steppes. Manuscripts with his records are preserved now in the manuscript fund of the Oriental faculty of the St. Petersburg University under call numbers Q-544 and F-64. They bear the titles "Jangar, Maloderbet record, 1862, the 9th of August" and "Jangar, 1863" correspondingly. The first one contains three chapters of the epic: (i) Song on the victory over Šar Birman; (ii) Song on the capture of Jangar by the Khan of the Heaven; and (iii) On wrathful Šara Gürgü. The second manuscript contains only two chapters: (i) On wrathful Qara Kines, and (ii) On wrathful Manyas. In 1864, K. Golstunsky produced a lithographic edition, in Zaya-pandita script, of the text of the chapters "On wrathful Qara Kines" and "On wrathful Šara Gürgü" [3]. Later these chapters were included by A. Pozdnev into his "Kalmyk Textbook" [4]. In 1911, he supplemented its next edition with the song "On wrathful Manyas". The "Song on the victory over Šar Birman" and the "Song on the capture of Jangar by the Khan of the Sky", recorded by K. Golstunsky, were re-discovered only in 1970 by the Kalmyk scholar A. Kichikov who made an abridged translation of these chapters into Russian [5].

A valuable contribution to the task of collecting, publishing and investigating the songs of "Jangar" was made