

MONGOLIAN TRIBAL NAMES IN THE HISTORIA TARTARORUM¹

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This essay aims to introduce and analyse a less known source called *Historia Tartarorum* (in English *Tartar Relation*) written by C. de Bridia, a franciscan friar, in July 1247. This text based on Carpini's² work³ and because of it in the translations⁴ Bridia's own work was written by cursive.

According to Carpini, the new source is important because it's text contains some tribal names in Mongolian. This is remarkable because it miyt shed some liyt on the Mongolian pronunciation in the 13th century, considering that the friar wrote down the Mongolian words as he heard them. These words are *kara* which means black, *nara* (sun), *irgen* (people), *nochoy* (noqai=dog) *kazdar* (ɣajar=place) *Coni* (qoni=sheep) *uzzu* (usu=water) *ucor* (üker=cow) *colon* (köl=foot) *terim* (head). *Terim* is a misunderstood version of *terigün*. May be the copyist missed out at least one character from the unknown Mongolian word, and the last two letters were misread: instead of *un* he saw *im*. This mistake was usual in the Middle Ages.

These are the caputs containing Mongolian words:

7. [...] and joining forces with the Karakitai, or Black Kitai (*kara in Tartar means 'black'*).⁵

This section is almost identical to the text of Carpini. However Bridia's explanation of the word *kara* is different. The Chinese Liao-dynasty was founded by the Kitais: after the fall of their empire (1125) they established the Karakitai realm which existed until 1211. They spoke some kind of Mongolian language.⁶

13. After these *three* months he came to *great mountains in a country called Narayrgen, that is, Men of the Sun, for Nara is Tartar for sun, and Irgen means men.*⁷

After this section Bridia gives almost the same description as Carpini. Carpini wrote that the Mongols walked on a land where they did not find people, althouyt, there were trodden trackways.

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1. The Campus Hungary Program and the Students' Union of Eötvös Loránd University Faculty of Humanities supported my research. Thanks for Mónika Belucz who lectorated my essay.

2. Carpini was a Franciscan friar who went as a papal envoy to Güyük's court with Benedictus Polonus, Stephanus Ceslaus and C. de Bridia. Bridia stayed at Corenza's court.

3. See: Contemporaries of Marco Polo: consisting of the travel records to the eastern parts of the world of William of Rubruck [1253-1255]; the journey of John of Pian de Carpini [1245-1247]; the journal of Friar Odoric [1318-1330] & the oriental travels of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela [1160-1173]. New York, Dorset Press, 1989.

4. Skelton, R. A.; Marston, Thomas E., Painter, George Duncan: *The Vinland Map and the Tartar Relation*. New Haven Yale University Press, 1965.

5. [...] et associatis sibi Karakitais vel Nigris Kitatis, kara enim Tartarice Latine nigrum dicitur. Transl.: Skelton, R. A.; Marston, Thomas E., Painter, George Duncan: *The Vinland Map and the Tartar Relation*. New Haven Yale University Press, 1965. p. 58.

6. Vásáry, István: *A régi Belső-Ázsia története*. Budapest, Balassi, 2003. (Magyar Östörténeti Könyvtár) pp. 118-124.

7. Post hos tres menses venit ad montes magnos terre quae appellatur Narayrgen, id est homines solis, Nara enim tartarice sol dicitur latine irgen homines. Transl.: Skelton, R. A.; Marston, Thomas E., Painter, George Duncan: *The Vinland Map and the Tartar Relation*. New Haven Yale University Press, 1965. p. 64.

Finally they found a woman and a man and Chinggis questioned them about the nation of this country. They said that in this land the people live in the earth under the mountains. Chinggis sent the man as an envoy to them. The people said that they would appear in front of the khaan, but instead, they secretly attacked the Mongols. The Mongolian army left the territory because of the great losses and because of the Sun that comes up with such a noise it is impossible to endure.⁸ The Tartar Relation adds to this that they were attacked at night and „the aforesaid country is situated at the very end of the world, and beyond it no land is found, but only the ocean sea”.⁹

18. *The Tartars, however, not daring to return to their own land before the appointed time, lest Chingis Khan should condemn them to death, proceeded to the southeast, and marching for more than a month through the desert reached the Land of Dogs, which in Tartar is called Nochoy Kadzar; for nochoy means dog in Tartar, and kadzar means land. They found only women there without men, and taking two of these prisoner they waited by the river which flows through the middle of the country. They asked the women where and what kind the men were, and they replied that they were dogs by nature, and had crossed the river and rolled themselves in the sand, which owing to the coldness of the weather then froze. For a second and third time they did the same, and as the dogs were shaggy the mixture of ice and sand froze a hand's-breadth thick. This done, they charged upon the Tartars, who laughed and began to shoot them with their arrows, but succeeded in killing very few, as it was impossible to wound them except in the mouth or eyes. But the dogs ran swiftly up, throwing a horse to the ground with one bit and trotting it with the next. The Tartars, seeing that neither arrow nor sword could hurt the dogs, took to flight; and the dogs pursued them for three days, killed very many, dismissed them from their country, and so had peace from them ever after. One of the Tartars even told Friar Benedict, that his father was killed by the dogs at that time; and Friar Benedict believes beyond doubt that he saw one of the dog's women with the Tartars, and says she had even borne male children from them, but the boys were monsters. The aforesaid dogs are exceptionally shaggy, and understand every word that women say, while the women understand the dogs's sign language. If a woman bears a female child, it has a human form like mother, while if the child is a male it takes the shape of a dog like the father.*¹⁰The Land of Dogs (Kürin noqai ulus) also appears in the Mongolian historical tradition. However in this tradition the dogs are also described being maroon.

There is a list of nations in the LuAT¹¹ (*Forty tümen Mongol, four tümen Oyrat, six thousand Üjiged, Ongocha, Osgi, Bargu*¹², *Buriad, Tuwa, Urianhai, Uruytan, Qamiyan, Enggüd, intelligent*

8. Carpini V/16

9. TR 14 §

10. Tartari autem redire non presumentes ad propria ante statutum tempus a Cingis can, ne subirent sententiam capitalem, processerunt inter orientalem plagam et meridianam. Ambulantes plus quam mensem per desertum peruenerunt ad terram canum, que appellatur Tartarice Nochoy Kadzar. Nochoy enim Tartarice canis dicitur Latine, kadzar vero Tartarice 'terra' dicitur Latine. Inuenerunt tantummodo mulieres preter viros, quibus captis remanserunt duobus [diebus] iuxta flumen, quod medium terre transit, cumque int[e]r[rog]assent de viris, quales et ubi essent, responderunt quod canes naturales [essent], et audita fama hostium flumen transivisse. Tercia autem die canes omnes qui in terra fuerant coadunari apparuerunt, sed Tartaris iocum de eis facientibus transito flumine involverunt se sabulo, quod propter temporis frigiditatem congelatum est. Sicque secundo et tercio fecerunt, et quia canes pilosi erant, glacies cum sabulo congelata est ad spissitudinem unius palme. Quo facto super Tartaros irruerunt. Qui risum facientes sagittis eos impetere ceperunt. Sed quia nisi per os et oculos ledi non poterant, paucissimos peremerunt. Canes vero accurrentes citius uno morsu equum deciebant, altero Tatarum strangulabant. Tartari ergo cernentes quod canibus nec sagitte nec gladii nocere poterant, fugam inierunt quos canes persequentes per triduum interfectis plurimis a suis eos finibus eiecerunt. Et sic pacem ab eis de cetero habuerunt. Narravit etiam quidam fratri B Tartarus patrem suum a canibus tunc temporis interemptum. Frater preterea B. credit pro certo inter Tartaros unam de canum mulieribus se vidisse, quam etiam dicit peperisse a Tartaris, sed pueros monstruosos. Dicit autem canes sunt magis pilosi, intelligentes omnia verba mulierum (et mulieres nutus canum). Si mulier parit feminam, humanam formam matris habet, si masculum, canis efficitur sicut pater. See: Carpini V/13.

11. Shahdaryn Bira: Mongolian Historical Writing from 1200 to 1700. Center for East Asian Studies, 2002. pp. 170-219.

és Д. Баярсайхан: Монголын түүх бичлэг. Арван долоодугаар зуун. Улаанбаатар, 2011. pp. 63-74.

12. Name of a buriad ethnical group, means 'churlish'

people, pinto horse, the people of the team with the golden bowl, the people of maroon dogs, the people of brad, the people of the striped one-legged and others...)¹³ where this tribe is mentioned.¹⁴ The Land of the Dogs is also mentioned in the early Chinese sources and situated them northwest from the Shang China.¹⁵ There lived a tribe („*Dog Jung*”) whose ancestors were dogs. A Chinese traveller Hi Chiao in the 10th century stayed among the Kitais and he wrote about the dog-tribe (dog-headed men) living north from the Kitais.¹⁶ The tribe of Dog-man and their anthropomorphic wife was also mentioned in an other foreign source: in the description of travel of King Hethum.¹⁷ He started his journey to the Mongol court in 1253, where Möngke received him.¹⁸ In the 17th century Manchu sources wrote about a „*dog-sender*”(in manchu: indahūn takūrara) tribe.¹⁹

*Plinius*²⁰ located the „*dog-tribe*” in *Western-Africa (in the Canaries, because the Latin word canis means dog, and he identified the islands’ name with the Latin word of the dog)*²¹. They and the dog-headed are frequently associated with the Amazons and are located in the Eastern end of the world.²² They were derived from Adam and Eve, but after who were chased to East from Eden.²³

The Mongols believed they were descended from a grey wolf (and a red hind),²⁴ but the dogs were also important in the Mongolian culture. Presumably, the ancient, medieval and Chinese sources’ origin is en rapport with the Altai people’s (furthermore, with the Estonian, Hungarian and Finnish) beliefs that they have an animal ancestor. Many times this ancestor was a wolf or a dog.²⁵ This topos spread in Europe based on Herodotus’ description. The Chinese had direct connection with the nomads because they had heard about their animal ancestors.

20. *The Comanians, however, joined forces with the whole nation of the Russians and fought the Tartars near two small rivers, one called Kalka and the other called Coniuzzu (that is, Sheep’s Water for coni means sheep in Tartar and uzzu means water), and were beaten by the Tartars.*²⁶

This part describes the battle of Kalka when the Kievan–Cuman–Russian army was defeated on 31 May 1223.²⁷ This is the only record about the name of the other, but it still miyt be correct. Maybe this river was the Kal’mius, because its name sounds like *conizzu* as well.²⁸

21. Lastly they came to the people called *Ucorcolon, that is, Ox-feet, because ucor is Tartar for ox and colon for foot, or otherwise Nochoyterim, that is Dog-heads, nochoy being Tartar for dog and*

13. döcin tümen Mongyol : dörben tümen Oyirad : jiryuyan mingyan Üjiged : Ongyoca : Osgi . Baryu : Buriyad . Tou-a . Uriyangqan . Uruytan . Qamiyan : Enggüd : oyin irgen . alay aduyutu : altan tebsitü bölög cölög ulus : kürin noqai ulus : terigün ügei ulus : eriyen γayca kül-tü ulus terigüten : edün ekiten ulus-i erke-tür-iyen oroyulju

14. Lubsandanjan: Altan Tobči. Ulaγanbayatur, 1990. p. 130. and the transcription, see Vietze, Hans-Peter; Lubsang, Gendeng; Altan Tobči. Eine mongolische Chronik des XVII. Jahrhunderts von Blo Bzañ bstan ’jin. Text und Index. Tokyo, 1992. p. 92.

15. Chinese dynasty, BC. XVII-XI. century

16. White, David Gordon: Myths of the Dog-Man. University of Chicago, 1991. p. 133.

17. White,; Myths of the Dog-Man p.131-132.

18. Adalian, Rouben Paul: The Historical Dictionary of Armenia. Scarecrow Press, 2010. p. 361.

19. Daicing gurun i fukjin doru neihe bodogon i bithe. s.l. 1778. V/46

20. Plinius (AD 23-79) was a Roman author and natural philosopher. He wrote an encyclopedic work called *Naturalis Historia*.

21. White,; Myths of the Dog-Man p. 59.

22. White,; Myths of the Dog-Man pp. 58-59.

23. White: Myths of the Dog-Man p. 63.

24. Secret History of Mongols 1 §

25. White: Myths of the Dog-Man p. 131.

26. Comani autem coadunati cum Ruthenis omnibus pugnaverunt cum Tartaris iuxta duos rivulos - nomen unius Calc, alterius vero Coniuzzu, id est ovium aqua, coni enim Tartarice oves dicuntur Latine, uzzum vero aqua - et devicti sunt a Tartaris. see Carpini V/11

27. Sinor: A mongolok nyugaton. p. 312.

28. Painter: The Tartar Relation. p. 73. 5. note

*terim for head. They have feet like oxen from the ankles down, and a human head from the back of the head to their ears, but with a face in every respect like a dog's, and for that reason they take their name from the part of monstrous in form. They speak two words and bark the third, and so can be called dogs for this reason also. They, too live in forests and are nimble enough when they run, and the Tartars despised them like others.*²⁹

About the ox-feet the LuAT³⁰ does not write, but it does write about the people people who are one-legged and even that one is striped (*eriyen γayča köl-tü ulus*). Maybe these two tribes are two parts of the same tradition. Carpini too wrote about the one-legged.³¹

The idea of the dog-headed man (*cynocephalus*) has also appeared in Herodotus' writings.³² *Ctesias* also wrote about them,³³ and they were also reported in the Ancient Egypt. In the orthodox Christian tradition Saint Christopher (third-century martyr) is portrayed with a dog-head. In the medieval West the *Alexander Romance* spread and influenced the legends of saints – like Andrew's. The non-European tribes were compared to the monsters described in the *Alexander Romance*: the Scythians, Parthians, Huns, Alans, Mongols and Türks were pictured being dog-headed in the mind of the early medieval people.³⁴

Carpini also wrote about the dog-headed and we can find the tribe in Marco Polo's description as well. However he located them to the northern parts of the island of Angamanain (as opposed to Bridia and Carpini).³⁵ Hu Chiao wrote in the 10th century:

Further to north is the Kingdom of Dogs [Kou Kuo], where the inhabitants have the bodies of men and the heads of dogs. They have long hair, they have no clothes they overcome wild beasts with their bare hands, their language is the barking of dogs. Their women have a human form and can speak Chinese; when they give birth to males, they have the form of dogs; when they give birth to females, these have the forms of humans.³⁶

It should be noted that these descriptions located these tribes to the edges of the known world. Based on this caputs it can be concluded these descriptions were not just part of the European imagination, but they were spread across the world. Although the idea of the dog-headed men originates from antiquity, probably these ideas existed among the Mongols as well as we saw in the description of Bridia who gave the name of this tribe correctly in classical Mongolian. Probably the origins of these imaginations were the dog ancestors of nomads, an image that spread in Europe through Herodotus. The Chinese had direct connection with the nomads so they may have known about their myths. However they got to know a distorted version in which the humans had dog-heads or the humans have the forms of dogs. Maybe the Mongols heard back this wide-spread myth and that is the reason why the Altan Tobči writes about the Land of the Dogs.

29. Postremo venerunt ad eos qui vocantur Ucorcolon – ucor Tartarice Latine dicitur bos, colon pedes – quasi boves pedis, vel dicuntur Nochoyterim: nochoy canis, terim [caput] dicitur, id est canis caput, Latine vero dicuntur canina capita. Habent bovinos pedes a talis deorsum, caput hominis ab occipite usque ad aures, faciem autem per omnia sicut canis, et ideo a parte denominantur degeneri. Isti duo verba locuntur et tertium latrant, et idcirco etiam canes possunt nominari. Sunt etiam silvestres et in cursu agiles competenter et hos similiter contempserunt. see Carpini V/31

30. Lubsandanjan: Altan Tobči. *Ulaγanbayatur*, 1990. p. 130. transcription I. Vietze, Hans-Peter; Lubsang, Gendeng: Altan Tobči. *Eine mongolische Chronik des XVII. Jahrhunderts von Blo Bzañ bstan 'jin*. Text und Index. Tokyo, 1992. p. 92.

31. Carpini V/33

32. Herodotus: *The Histories*. London, W. Heinemann; New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1921-24. IV/191.

33. White: *Myths of the Dog-Man* p. 52.

34. White: *Myths of the Dog-Man* pp. 52-53.

35. Marco Polo III/13

36. White: *Myths of the Dog-Man* p. 133.

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