

Reviews

The Secret History of the Mongols. A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century. Translated with a Historical and Philological Commentary by Igor de Rachewiltz. Volume 3 (Supplement). Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2013, XXIII+226 pp. (Brill’s Inner Asian Library, 7/3. Ed. by Michael R. Drompp, Dewin DeWeese)

An important event for *The Secret History of the Mongols* (SH) researchers took place last summer, when the Brill Academic Publishers issued Volume 3 (Supplement) of “The Secret History of the Mongols. A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century. Translated with a Historical and Philological Commentary by Igor de Rachewiltz”. The third volume was published under the same title, by the same publishers, following the same design and using financial help of the same sources as the 2004 edition.¹

There is no need to introduce the fundamental two-volume 2004 edition which summed up not only Professor de Rachewiltz’s many years of profound research, but also almost a century and a half of study of the SH by his predecessors and contemporaries. It is an encyclopedic piece of research work which combines translation, interpretation and detailed commentary accompanied by extensive reference apparatus. Of special value is the Bibliography which is both vast and thoroughly and thoughtfully selected from the *mare magnum* of publications on the subject.

As regards its size—but not its importance!—the third volume is considerably smaller than the preceding two. It is subtitled “Supplement” and it provides supplementary information following the structure of the other two volumes with reference to their pages, sections and bibliography. It presents additional information in a concise form and corrections that would have been inserted if there had been a new edition of the 2004 publication. The third volume is inseparably linked to the first two, being an extension and essential part of them and thus in many respects unsuitable for independent reading. On the other hand, now that this volume is available, it has

¹ The Secret History of the Mongols. A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century. Translated with a Historical and Philological Commentary by Igor de Rachewiltz. Vol. 1, 2. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2004. (Brill’s Inner Asian Library, 7/1. Ed. by Nicola Di Cosmo, Dewin DeWeese, Carolin Humphrey).

to be taken into consideration when reading or referring to de Rachewiltz's opinion on anything concerning the SH.

In the Preface, the author indicates two factors that prompted the preparation of the Supplement. The first was the necessity for updating caused by the ongoing interest in the SH that has only increased over the last decade and engendered a huge amount of new publications. The second was the desire to correct all the typographical errors, minor slips and omissions that had crept into 2004 edition. Accordingly, the third volume has two parts. The second part, "Typographical and Minor Errors and Omissions" (pp. 143–147), is just a list of corrections (minor misprints, even down to an incorrect font size or the omission of punctuation). The first part, "Additions and Revisions" (pp. 1–141), is the main one presenting all additions based on new publications and others that were not available to the author at the time. The additions can be divided roughly into two groups: the first one contains bibliographical additions giving references to new publications, sometimes accompanied by brief descriptions of their subject and words of approval; the second one represents "additions of ideas." In the latter section the author expounds his new ideas, views, afterthoughts, interpretations and considerations and also evaluates, contradicts, doubts or approves ideas expressed by scholars over the decade since the publication of the first two volumes finally refusing or accepting them.

Among the many secrets of the SH, two are of primary importance, or, more precisely, of interest not only to experts but to anyone who has ever dealt with the chronicle in any way. They are the dating and the authorship of the SH. In both cases, the number of options is limited and, in both cases, de Rachewiltz has changed his own opinion in favor of new views. The date of the SH, which was once generally accepted as being 1240, was later shifted by some scholars to 1228 and by others to 1252. De Rachewiltz now suggests 1229 (instead of 1228). The author of the SH will probably never be known for sure, although his "portrait" has been drawn quite accurately by many scholars. In the third volume, the name of Ögödei is suggested as the author (instead of Šigi Qutuqu). Although de Rachewiltz writes that it "remains entirely speculative," he gives enough data from the text to make this candidacy, while not entirely proven, highly plausible.

Experts will find a lot of new information concerning many vague or problematic paragraphs and words in the SH that are discussed in about 500 books, monographs and articles in Chinese, English, German, Japanese, Mongolian and Russian, which have been added in the third volume to the more than 1,300 in the Bibliography of the 2004 edition.

Among three Indexes for the third volume (Proper and Place Names, Subjects, Grammar and Lexis), the last is a supplement to the Index in 2004 edition. The third volume has seven illustrations, two of which show the area and a plaque marking the place where Činggis Qan died (in the 2004 edition, there is a photograph of his birthplace).

The Addenda comprise another dozen additions made after the deadline for the third volume (December 31, 2012). Still one more addition should be made. On December 1, 2013 Prof. de Rachewiltz sent some colleagues (including the reviewer) two more corrections and this is a good chance to make them available to everybody. Here they are:

Page 7: under Page lxiii, line 22: *for* 230^a, *read* 203^a

Page 164: under Kara 2005: *for* UAS, *read* JAS

Igor de Rachewiltz's ability and talent to keep track of, accumulate and sort out "a flurry of publications" on the SH, combined with his profound knowledge of the subject, has resulted in a unique three-volume publication unmatched in the past and likely to remain so in the foreseeable future.

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Oldenburg S.F. *Etiudy o liudiah nauki* ("Sketches of Men of Science"). Ed. by S.D. Serebryany, compilation, introduction and commentary by A.A. Vigasin. — Moscow: RSUH, 2012. — 478 p.

The book *Sketches of Men of Science* was published by the Russian State University for the Humanities on the threshold of a significant date—the 150th anniversary of the birth of Academician Sergei Fedorovich Oldenburg (1863–1934).

The idea of producing such a book had been forming among Orientalists over a period of many years.

Oldenburg's essays about personalities of Russian and foreign academic world, especially Oriental Studies, appeared in the author's lifetime in various publications, which are now available only in the reading rooms of the largest national libraries.

These essayistic works have not lost their informative value over the course of time.

Most importantly, they retain the vivid essence of the scholarly thinking of a man who was an outstanding organizer of Russian academic research, a classic figure in the Russian school of Buddhist Studies and the Russian school of Oriental Studies in Archaeology.

It is high time to introduce the modern reader to the entirety of his essays in one volume.

Now, when the classical traditions of Russian Oriental Studies are coming back to life, it is more important than ever before.

The book *Sketches of Men of Science* was prepared by Alexei Vigasin, an Indologist historian with encyclopedic erudition, as a scholarly publication which is not
