

Note on Transliteration, Conventions and Geographical Terminology

Anyone who studies the Mongol Empire experiences the unique challenge of working with names transliterated from at least half a dozen languages. While scholars have agreed on some standardisation, multiple systems abound. With both personal and geographical names, I have attempted to remain faithful to the names in terms of their pronunciation according to the language from which they originated. In some cases, more modern spellings have been used rather than the medieval spellings (e.g. Khubilai Khan instead of Qubilai Qan), simply for reasons of popular convention and ease of access. Diacriticals have been omitted as per the series guidelines. Scholars proficient in those languages will have little difficulty in deducing the terms in the original language.

Geographical terms refer to their medieval connotation; hence, references to Mongolia, Syria or China do not refer to the modern state, unless specifically noted. The same goes for other locations. In some instances, such as Afghanistan, a modern term is used for the sake of simplicity. Afghanistan as a concept did not exist in the thirteenth century, but the term still proves useful when discussing the region in general.

There are various translations of the *Secret History of the Mongols*. Igor de Rachewiltz's is considered the best and has copious notes, but Urgunge Onon's and Francis Cleaves' are also quite serviceable. Rather than the pages of all translations being cited, the section or paragraph is cited so that the reader can refer to any edition. See Igor de Rachewiltz (ed. and trans.), *Secret History of the Mongols*, 3 vols (Leiden, 2004, 2013); Urgunge Onon (ed. and trans.), *The Secret History of the Mongols: The Life and Times of Chinggis Khan* (London, 2001); and Francis W. Cleaves (ed. and trans.), *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Cambridge, MA, 1982).