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Titel: Mongolic čilagun : Turkic tãš

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Ort: Wiesbaden

Jahr: 2010

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Mongolic *čilagun* : Turkic *tāš*

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Kempf, Béla 2010. Mongolic *čilagun* : Turkic *tāš*. *Turkic Languages* 14, 103-112.

The Turkic and Mongolic words for stone (**tāš* and **čilagun* respectively) have featured in the literature as counterparts of each other from the very beginning of modern Altaic studies. This paper re-interprets the etymological relationship of these two words, and offers a new method for analysis of the Mongolic member of the comparison. To add support for the model described in the paper, two other Mongolic words, **čisun* ‘blood’ and **čidku-* ‘to pour’, are discussed, both of which seem to be ultimately of Turkic origin, and to exhibit a similar process of change as the word **čilagun*.

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The pair of words comprising the Mongolic **čilagun* ~ LM *čilayun* ‘stone’ and the Turkic **tāš* ~ OT *tāš* ‘stone’ (ED 557a), is one of the most frequently cited examples in Altaic comparative works. In spite of the fact that their morphological structures are not the same, they are usually mentioned in etymological works as counterparts of each other. The comparison is generally used to illustrate two linguistic phenomena. The first is the case of an *-i-* in Mongolic opposed to a Turkic *-a/-ā-*, e.g. Mongolic **nirai* ‘newborn, baby; fresh, new’ : Turkic **yāz* ‘summer, spring’, Mongolic **niga-* ‘to paste, glue’ : Turkic **yap-* ‘to build, to stick together’, Mongolic **nilbusun* ‘tears, mucus, spittle’ : Turkic **yāš* ‘fresh, moist, tears’. The second phenomenon is called lambdacism (or sigmatism), where a Mongolic *-l-* is opposed to Turkic *-š-*, e.g. Mongolic **gölöge* ‘pup, young dog or cat’ : Turkic **köšek* ‘a young animal’, Mongolic **taulai* ‘hare’ : Turkic **tabišgan* ‘hare’, Mongolic **kalbaga* ‘spoon’ : Turkic **kašuk* ‘spoon’.

The works which make use of this word-pair are so numerous that I mention them here only selectively.

The idea of comparing these words originates from Ramstedt (1903: 97), who refers to them together with their Tungusic equivalents to demonstrate lambdacism.

The etymology was probably inspired by recognition of the fact that the Mongolic **č* can often be traced back to **t* before an *i*-like sound. Thus, the Mongolic counterpart of Turkic **tiğrak* ~ OT *tiğraq* ‘firm, tough’ (ED 471b) is **čigirag*, while the Turkic verb **tiñla-* ~ OT *tiñla-* ‘to listen to, to hear’ (ED 522a) is **čingla-* or **čingna-* in Mongolic.

This idea of Ramstedt was developed by Gombocz (1905: 260), who supplemented the comparison with data from the different Turkic, Mongolic and Tungusic

languages. Later, as Korean and Japanese were included in the presumed Altaic linguistic family, data from these languages additionally appeared in the literature.¹

As a strong supporter of the Altaic theory, Poppe accepted and strengthened this etymology in many of his works, especially in his comparative grammars:

Mo. *čilayun* 'stone, rock' < CM **čilayun* < Pre-Mongolian **tilayun* = Kor. *tol*, Chuvash *t's'ul* < **t'al*, Turk. *taş* < **tal'* id." (1955: 114)

mo. *čilayun* < **tilawūn* 'Stein', mmo. *čila'un* id., kh. *čulū* id. = ko. *tol* 'Stein' = tsch. *t's'ul* (*č'ul*) < **t'al* 'Stein', AT *taş* < **tāš*, jak. *tās* < **tāš*." (1960: 15)

mo. *čilayun* < vmo. **tilagūn* 'Stein', kh. *čulū* id., bur. *šulūñ* id. (> ew. *jolo* id., lam. *jol* id.) = ko. *tol* 'Stein' = tsch. *č'ul* < **tal* < *tal'* < **tāl'* 'Stein', AT, čag. *taş*, jak. *tās* id." (1960: 77)

mo. *čilayun* < **tilayun* < **t'ālabūn* 'Stein', kalm. *čolūn* id. = ko. *tol* id. = tsch. *č'ul* < **t'āl* < **tāl'* 'Stein', trkm. *dāš* id., jak. *tās* id." (1960: 98)

mo. *čilayun* < **tila-wūn* 'Stein' = tsch. *č'ul* < **t'āl* < **tāl'* < **tāl'a* id., AT *taş* < **tāš* < *tāl'* < *tāl'a* id." (1960: 120), and other works of his (e.g. 1974).

The difficulty of the Altaic reconstruction is well exemplified by the three different reconstructions in four different forms: **tilawūn*, **tilagūn*, **t'ālabūn* and **tila-wūn*.

Poppe's reconstructions and the comparison itself were criticized by Doerfer (1965: 437-438) in item 855 of the TMEN (2). He rejects the possibility of the Koreanic word belonging here, pointing out that the Tungusic data cannot be copies from the Buryat, and argues against the many Mongolistic reconstructions of the same Mongolic word. The strongest of his arguments are no. 1, according to which Poppe's reconstructions are incoherent, and no. 4, in which he states that the element *-yun* of the Mongolic word was not explained. Further, Doerfer mentions that the suffix *-yun* exists in Mongolic as a deverbal noun suffix, cf. Poppe 1954: §154.

Among recent works mentioning this etymology, I would like to highlight the *Etymological Dictionary of the Altaic Languages* (ED) (Starostin, Dybo & Mudrak 2003: 1373-1374), in which an enumeration of the comparative data from all branches of the "Altaic language family" is followed by the settling of the problem with the laconic statement: "Counterarguments against the etymology by Doerfer (TMN 2, 437-438) are not convincing."

In spite of this, the connection of the Turkic and the Mongolic word does not seem to be solved and a discussion of the question at the Altaic level is therefore quite risky.

¹ As this question will not be dealt with here, for the detailed discussion of the etymology of the Japanese and Korean data and their relation to the other Altaic languages, the reader is referred to Miller 1970: 120-121 and the respective item of the *Etymological Dictionary of the Altaic Languages*.

In the present paper, I would like to discuss new etymologies for the Mongolic word **čilagun*, and two other Mongolic words.

I consider that the Mongolic word **čilagun* is a copy from Turkic, and I agree that its etymon is the Turkic (or Altaic?) word **tāš*, but not in the same manner as appears in earlier etymologies.

In accord with the previous reconstructions, I believe that the segment *-gun* is a Mongolic suffix; after its separation, therefore, the stem seems to be **čila*.

I suggest that this word is a verb. The Turkic word **tāš* has been contracted into the sound *č* of the stem **čila-* in the same manner as in the cases of the Turkic words **čik- ~ OT čik-* ‘to go out, to come out’ (ED 405b) < **tašik- ~ OT tašik-* ‘to go out’ (ED 562a) and of **čok ~ Middle Turkic čok* ‘many’ < **tašok* (Berta 1999). Thus, the reconstructed Mongolic form would be **tašila-*, which is a denominal verb in *+lA-* of the Turkic word. Although a verb with this form is demonstrable from Turkic, cf. Old Turkic *tašla-* ‘to throw stones (at someone), to stone’ (ED 564b), this Old Turkic verb is not necessarily the same as the one which served as the stem of the reconstructed Mongolic word. This appears reasonable if one considers the many shades of meaning of the denominal verb suffix *+lA-* both in Turkic and in Mongolic.

To explain the sound *i* in Mongolic, there are two possibilities:

1. The vowel *i* is original, and thus Mongolic reveals the quality of the Proto-Turkic final vowel of the word meaning ‘stone’ as **tašl*, which, taking the denominal verb suffix *+lA-*, will result in **tašila-*. Supposition of such a vowel at the auslaut position of the Turkic word additionally explains the puzzling form of the Chuvash word.

2. This sound is a linking vowel, since phonotactics in Mongolic did not allow the cluster of *šl*, and hence the usage of a linking vowel was needed in order to make the pronunciation easier and possible. A further point is that, despite the sound *š* not being an original Mongolic phoneme, at some point in the history of the Mongolic languages it appears as a secondary phoneme, but only before the vowel *i*. In other words, during its early history, Mongolic did not possess any other *šV* combinations than *ši*, which reveals that the linking vowel between *š* and *l* could not be other than *i*.

Accordingly both the presence and the quality of the vowel *i* is well supportable in Mongolic.

The Mongolic suffix(es) (+/-)gUn

To turn back to Doerfer’s counterarguments, let us consider the suffix (+/-)gUn in Mongolic.

First of all, it must be observed that there existed at least two, and maybe three suffixes with the shape gUn. It is clear that one of them is deverbal, while the denominal derivations can be divided into two groups. The first group includes those words derived from a pronoun stem. Such are the conjugational stems **egün* and

**tegün* of the demonstrative bases **e*+ ‘this,’ and **te*+ ‘that,’ the interrogative pronoun **yagun* ‘what,’ and the adverbs **jegün* ‘left,’ **baragun* ‘right,’ **gadagun* ‘exterior, outer,’ **činagun* ‘thither, ulterior,’ and **nirugun* ‘back, posterior’. The second group consists of Mongolic words in which the function of the suffix was regarded by Poppe as denoting body parts and animal names² (Poppe 1923: 116). It must be admitted that there are several Mongolic words which may contain the suffix (+/-)*gUn*, but their etymology is obscure. Examples are: **togurugun* ‘crane,’ **galagun* ‘goose,’ **sibagun* ‘bird,’ **adagun* ‘horse, herd of horses,’ **köbegün*³ ‘son,’ **tokugun* ‘joke, fun,’ **čibkagun* ‘sluggish, slow,’ **silugun* ‘straight, plain,’ **sabayun* ‘the part of the reins near a horse’s mouth,’ **samagun* ‘confusion, disorder,’ **biragun*⁴ ‘calf in its second year,’ **talbigun* ‘broad, wide, vast, gentle, calm,’ etc.

If we consider the above etymology, then in the word **čilagun* we are faced with a deverbal noun suffix. Among the Mongolic examples of this suffix, we find several whose stem is of Turkic origin, which reveals that the Mongolic deverbal noun suffix -*gUn* was productive at the time of the early Turko–Mongolic linguistic contacts.

Examples that are ultimately of Turkic origin are:

Mo. **arigun* ~ LM *ariyun* ‘cleanliness, purity, chastity; clean, pure, clear; chaste; sinless; holy, sacred’ ← Turkic **ari-* ~ OT *arī-* ‘to be or become, clean, pure’ (ED 198a);

Mo. **bidügün* ~ LM *bidügün/büdügün* ‘large, huge, big; crude, clumsy; plain, simple; ignorant, rough; deep (of voice)’ ← Turkic **bādū-* ~ OT *bādū-* ‘to be, or become, big, great’ (ED 299b);

² Later, in his paper on Mongolic names of body parts, Poppe deals again with this suffix (1973: 236–237). Beside the body parts like **deligün* ‘spleen,’ **küjügün* ‘neck,’ **erügün* ‘chin, lower jaw,’ **omorugun* ‘collarbone,’ **terigün* ‘head,’ **košigun* ‘beak, bill,’ **kurugun* ‘finger,’ he mentions that Mongolic **čarbagun* ‘forearm’ is the only example where the suffix derives a body part from a verb, cf. LM *čarba-* ‘to raise or move the hands or feet; to grasp, pull, or trip with the hands or feet in wrestling’. To Poppe’s single example let me add another one. Although he lists the word **ebčigün* ‘breastbone’ among his examples, he treats it as a denominal derivation, and gives the reconstructed form **ebti-gün* (Poppe 1973: 236). However, this word is a deverbal derivation from the Mongolic verb **ebči-/ebče-* ~ LM *ebče-* ‘to reconcile oneself with, make up with; to embrace; to unite’. Now, that we have two deverbal derivations on the semantic field of body parts, it could be worth examining the other examples with this suffix as well.

³ There is, however, a possibility to connect the Mongolic word **köbegün* with Turkic **köpek* ‘dog’. For a similar semantic change, cf. the Hungarian word *kölyök* ← Turkic **köšek*.

⁴ Mongolic **biragun* is etymologically connected to Turkic **buzagu* ~ OT *buzagu* ‘a calf’ (ED 391). Clauson suggests that it is formed by the suffix *gU*; however, it is not clear if he is speaking about a denominal or a deverbal formant.

Mo. **bitegün* ~ LM *bitegün* ‘the last day of a thirty-day month; the last day of the year’
← Turkic **bit-* ~ OT *bit-/büt-* ‘to become complete’ > 1. ‘to come to an end, be finished’ 2. ‘to be ready to start’ (ED 298b);

Mo. **čikiragun* ~ LM *čikirayun* ‘squeaking, squeaky’ ← Mo. **čikira-* ~ LM *čikira-* ‘to squeak’ ← Turkic **čikra-* ~ OT *čigra-* ‘to squeak, grate’ (ED 410b).

Genuine Mongolic examples include:

Mo. **aglagun* ~ LM *aγliyun/aγlayun* ‘compact, dense, thick’ ← **agla-/agli-* (LM –)
← **ag* ~ Khalkha (Kara) *ag* [aγ] ‘szoros, szűk; szorosan, szűken’ [tight, narrow];

Mo. **agsigun* ~ LM *aγsiyun* ‘condensed; thick; dry; stale, tasteless (as meat or stale bread)’ ← Mo. **agsi-* ~ LM *aγsi-* ‘to condense, contract, shrink, shrivel; to kink, curl up; to warp; to parch, dry to excess’ (cf. LM *egsi-* ‘to dry, dry up; to dry in the sun’) ← **ag* cf. Khalkha (Kara) *ag* [aγ] ‘szoros, szűk; szorosan, szűken’ [tight, narrow];

Mo. **buduligun* ~ LM *buduliyun* ‘awkward, clumsy, maladroit, sluggish, tardy; dull, obtuse’ ← Mo. **buduli-* ~ LM *buduli-* ‘to do something in confusion; to cause confusion; to be confused’;

Mo. **čaglagun* ~ LM *čaylayun* ‘the act of measuring, weighing, or comparing; that which is measured, weighed, or compared’ ← Mo. **čagla-* ~ LM *čayla-* ‘to set a time; to measure, weigh, compare; to limit; to act moderately; to imagine, consider, realize’;

Mo. **čarbagun* ~ LM *čarbayun* ‘wrist, forearm’ ← Mo. **čarba-* ~ LM *čarba-* ‘to raise or move the hands or feet; to grasp, pull, or trip with the hands or feet in wrestling’;

Mo. **čidkugdagun* ~ LM *čidquydayun* ‘cast or smelted metal’ ← Mo. **čidkugda-* ~ LM *čidquйда-* ‘passive of *čidqu-*’ ← Mo. **čidku-* ~ LM *čidqu-* ‘to pour, pour into; to smelt, cast, or found metals; to mint coins; to flow’;

Mo. **čigtagun* ~ LM *čiytayun* ‘tight, tightly pulled, taut, stiff, tough; hard-mouthed; disobedient’ ← Mo. **čigta-* (LM –), cf. LM *čiytaya* ‘rope or string for pulling an object towards oneself; rope attached to the frame of the smoke hole of a yurt’;

Mo. **čimkigün* ~ LM *čimkigün/čimkegün* ‘severe cold when the sky is overcast, cold and gloomy weather’ ← Mo. **čimki-* ~ LM *čimki-* ‘to pinch, tweak, nip’;

Mo. **činegejgün* ~ LM *činegejgün* ‘strong, vigorous; wealthy’ ← Mo. **činegej-* ~ LM *činegej-* ‘to become strong; to become prosperous or wealthy’;

Mo. **ebčigün* ~ LM *ebčigün* ‘sternum, chest; brisket’ ← Mo. **ebči-* ~ LM *ebče-* ‘to reconcile oneself with, make up with; to embrace; to unite’;

Mo. **gemsigdegün* ~ LM *gemsigdegün* ‘cause for repentance; fault, sin’ ← Mo. **gemsigde-* (LM –) ← Mo. **gemi-* ~ LM *gemi-* ‘to repent, regret, feel remorse, do penance, confess sins, plead guilty’;

Mo. **geskegün* ~ LM *geskegün* ‘thawed, melted’ ← Mo. **geske-* ~ LM *geske-* ‘to thaw, melt, defrost’;

Mo. **kagagdagun* ~ LM *qayaydayun* ‘obstacle, impediment, hindrance’ ← Mo.

**kagagda-* ~ LM *qayayda-* ‘pass. of *qaya-*’ ← **kaga-* ~ LM *qaya-* ‘to close; to block, keep out (as wind, rain); to attack from all sides; to surround, besiege; to serve in an official capacity’;

Mo. **kalagun* ~ LM *qalayun* ‘hot; warm; intimate; heat, warmth; fever’ ← Mo. **kala-* ~ LM *qala-* ‘to be(come) or feel warm or hot (not used of weather); to be(come) warmed up or heated up’;

Mo. **kegjegün* ~ LM *kegjegün/kegjiğün* ‘testy, obstinate, irritated, hot-tempered; arrogant, overbearing’ ← Mo. **kegje-* (LM –), cf. LM *kegjer* ‘a testy or quarrelsome person; captious, nagging, fault-finding’;

Mo. **kengsigün* ~ LM *kengsigün* ‘smell of frying food; smell of burning’ ← Mo. **kengsi-* ~ LM *kengsi-* ‘to burn slightly, brown (as food)’; cf. Turkic *kōñ-* ‘to catch fire, to burn’ (ED 726b);

Mo. **kösigün* ~ LM *kösigün* ‘hard, uneven, rough; stubborn, obstinate; rude, impolite’ ← Mo. **kösi-* ~ LM *kösi-* ‘to harden, stiffen, become stiff (body, tongue, etc.)’;

Mo. **medegdegün* ~ LM *medegdegün* ‘all that which is known, understood, learned, recognized; object of study; knowledge, science, perception, sensation; rudiments, principles, elements; category’ ← Mo. **medegde-* ~ LM *medegde-* ‘to be or become known; be perceived or felt; to be manifested; to inform, advise, notify; to sense, be aware of; to feel’ ← Mo. **mede-* ~ LM *mede-* ‘to know, understand, perceive, be conscious of; to find out; to be in charge of; have the power of decision’;

Mo. **namjigun* ~ LM *namjiyun* ‘quiet, peaceful, calm, still’ ← Mo. **namj-* ~ LM *namj-* ‘to quiet down, become quiet; to subside, get better’;

Mo. **nemegün* ~ Khalkha (Bawden) *nemün* (< **nemegün*) ‘surplus, extra, additional’ ← Mo. **neme-* ~ LM *neme-* ‘to add, supplement, increase’;

Mo. **nilagun* ~ LM *niluyun* ‘oily, greasy (taste); cloying, excessively sweet (taste); disgusting’ (LM (K) *nilayun*) ← Mo. **nila-* ~ LM *nila-* ‘to smear, rub’

Mo. **ögsügün* ~ LM *ögsügün* ‘rising up[wards], upstream, uphill’ ← Mo. **ögsü-* ~ LM *ögsü-* ‘to ascend, go upstream’;

Mo. **simdagun* ~ LM *simdayun* ‘hasty, speedy, quick’ ← Mo. **simda-* ~ LM *simda-* ‘to hasten, rush, hurry, speed; to endeavor, make every effort’;

Mo. **surtagun* ~ LM *surtayun* ‘that which is taught or studied; science, rules, doctrine’ ← Mo. **surta-* ~ LM *surta-* ‘to be learnt, studied; to be trained, used to, accustomed to’;

Mo. **tarkagun* ~ LM *tarqayun(n)* ‘dissipated, dispersed, disseminated, scattered’ ← Mo. **tarka-* ~ LM *tarqa-* ‘to scatter, spread, be dispersed’;

Mo. **togtagun* ~ LM *toytayun* ‘calm, quiet’ ← Mo. **togta-* ~ LM *toyta-* ‘to stop, rest, become immobile; to set, etc.’;

Mo. **tomuragun* ~ LM *tomurayun* ‘clear, distinct, intelligible; enlarged’ ← Mo.

**tomura-* ~ LM *tomura-* ‘to become large, clear, distinct’;

Mo. **tornigun* ~ LM *torniγun* ‘of tall stature, well-grown, corpulent; healthy’ ← Mo. **torni-* ~ LM *torni-* ‘to grow, grow up (of children and young animals); to stand on one’s feet; to improve (of health)’;

Mo. **töbkinegün* ~ LM *töbkinegün* ‘cosy, well-arranged, well-organized, settled’ ← Mo. **töbkine-* ~ LM *töbkine-* ‘to be(come) stabilized; to settle down; to be put in order’;

Mo. **türgedügün* ~ LM *türgedügün* ‘rash, hasty’ ← Mo. **türged-* ~ LM *türged-* ‘to be rash; to be too quick; to fly into a temper’;

Mo. **unjigun* ~ LM *unjγun* ‘hanging, pendent; baggy, loose-hanging, droopy; long-lasting, protracted’ ← Mo. **unji-* ~ LM *unji-* ‘to hang down, be suspended; to drag along the ground; to droop; to be weak or sickly’.

The above examples show that the deverbal noun suffix *-gUn* originally derived adjectives peculiar to the result of the base verb. It is also clear, however, that some of these adjectives became nouns during a lexicalization process. Examples of this from the quoted material: **čarbagun*, **čidkugdagun*, **čimkigün*, **ebčigün*, **kengsigün*, **medegdegün*, **nemegün*, **kalagun*, **kagagdagun*, **surtagun*.

Thus, a possible way in which the Mongolic word for stone came into being could have been ‘to be hard as a stone’ → ‘something as hard as a stone’ → ‘stone’.

To become more certain concerning the above etymology of the Mongolic word **čilagun*, it should first be examined if there are other words in Mongolic that display a similar process in their history. Below, I demonstrate that there are such examples.

The first is the Mongolic word **čisun* ‘blood’. To the best of my knowledge, the Mongolic origin of this word has never been questioned. Although it was always clear that it is a derived word, formed with a suffix of the shape *sUn*, etymologization of its stem was not successful.

The word **čisun* appears on Janhunen’s (2003: 13) list, which consists of bisyllabic Mongolic words derived with the suffix *sUn*, the meanings of which are liquids or liquifiable things. Besides **čisun*, there are words such as **usu/n* ‘water’, **üsü/n* ‘milk’, **času/n* ‘snow’, **nisu/n* ‘mucus’, and **tosu/n* ‘oil, butter’. In these words, therefore, Janhunen identifies the function of the suffix *sUn* as a class-marker. Not ruling out the possibility that such a class-marker could exist in Mongolic, I have already pointed out the difficulties of this idea, citing some Mongolic words in which both of Janhunen’s criteria are met, but where the word does not mean a liquifiable thing (Kempf 2004: 377). Such are **yisün* ‘nine’, **jisün* ‘colour’, **üsün* ‘hair, fur’, **nasun* ‘year, age’, **yasun* ‘bone’, and **yosun* ‘custom, habit’.

In light of the etymology given below, it will be clear that we do not even have to deal here with the suffix *+sUn*, the function of which has already darkened and where the meaning of the derived word is the same as the meaning of the stem (Poppe 1954: §137).

The Mongolic word **čisun* goes back to the form **tašisun*. After we separate the suffix *-sUn*, the stem is **taši-*, which has a Turkic etymology. That is the Turkic verb **tašV-* ~ OT *taš-* ‘to overflow’ (ED 559b). It can be seen that the suffix *-sUn* is in no way a class-marker, but rather a simple deverbal noun suffix.

The same type of deverbal derivation appears in several Mongolic terms connected with body fluids, cf. **nisun* ‘mucus’ ← **ni-* ~ LM *nigi-* ‘to blow the nose’, **sigesün* ‘urine’ ← **sige-* ~ LM *sige-* ‘to urinate’, **nilbusun* ‘saliva’ ← **nilbu-* ~ LM *nilbu-* ‘to spit’, *kölösün* ‘perspiration’ ← **kölö-*, cf. LM *kölöre-* ‘to sweat, perspire’. Instead of surmising the suffix *-sUn* to be a class-marker, however, I think it is more reasonable to perceive this suffix as one which derives nouns that designate results of the action denoted by the base verb.

The presence or appearance of the vowel *i* was explained above, but let me add that the cluster *šs* was not possible in Mongolic.

A further word which could strengthen the etymology of the word **čilagun* is Mongolic **čidku-* ~ LM *čidqu-* ‘to pour, pour into; to smelt, cast, or found metals; to mint coins; to flow’. The etymon of the word is the Turkic verb **tašV-*, as well as in the case of **čisun*. **čidku-* goes back to the form **tašitku-*. The verb copied from Turkic was **tašit-*, which is one of the causative forms of the verb **tašV-*. The final segment *-ku* is probably a Mongolic suffix, the function of which is not clear since the meaning of the stem and the derived verb seem to be identical or very close to each other in the case of the etymologizable examples. Such LM verb-pairs include:

amis- ‘to breathe; to sigh’ / *amisqa-/amisqu-* ‘to breathe’;

qada- ‘to drive in, knock in; to nail; to inscribe or enter one’s name on a register; to insert something in a text; to get stuck’ / *qadqu-/qadqa-* ‘to pierce, stab, prick; to embroider; to pin; to sting, bite (as snake or insects), peck; to treat with acupuncture; to have a sharp pain’;

baǰu- ‘to press, crush, squeeze; to wring; to grasp’ / *baǰuyu-* ‘to press, crush, squeeze; to wring; to grasp’;

büri- ‘to cover, envelop; to upholster’ / *bürkü-* ‘to grow or become cloudy; to cover, cover up, to envelop’;

ende- ‘to err, fall into error, be mistaken, blunder; to go astray; to die’ / *endegü-* ‘to be mistaken about something, let something slip one’s attention’;

sere-/seri- ‘to awaken, revive; to recover consciousness; to become sober; to keep vigil; to learn, find out; to mistrust’ / *sergü-* ‘to recover, grow well, sober up, regain one’s spirits; to feel refreshed; to rouse oneself; to pull oneself together’.

The final questions of this examination are when and where the contraction of the sequence *tašV* into *či* could have happened. As the above-mentioned Mongolic words are present in the lexicon in the earliest monuments, it is clear that they were copied at the time of the early Turko–Mongolic linguistic contacts. The answer to

the second question is not so simple and depends on the origin of the sound *i* in the Mongolic words. If the vowel is original, then the contraction could have taken place in a Turkic language; on the other hand, if it is a linking vowel, the change happened in Mongolic.

I hope that this paper illustrates the fact that the possibilities of Mongolic etymology are not yet exhausted. Although the problem of the arguments pro or contra the Altaic theory cannot be solved by such individual etymologies, by ascertaining the etymology of the Mongolic word **čilagun* some questions can be solved and others re-opened, which is important for Altaic studies overall. The significance is not the fact that new light may be shed on an etymology more than a hundred years old, but that, in contrast with earlier obscure reconstructions, the history of the Mongolic word now becomes much clearer.

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