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Autor: Agyagási, Klára

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The West Old Turkic and the Volga Bulgarian loanwords of Cheremis

Klára Agyagási

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The study begins with an introduction of a new source for the investigation of the history of West Old Turkic, the Old Turkic loanwords in Hungarian (published by A. Róna-Tas and Á. Berta 2011). This lexical material is a unique oral monument of the Ogur language variety spoken between the 5th and 12th centuries. However, it fails to provide all possible information on the phonetic, morphological, derivational and syntagmatic peculiarities of the Ogur language. Many missing details concerning this language have been preserved by another oral monument of the Middle Turkic period (between the 13th and 16th centuries), namely the Volga Bulgarian loanwords of Cheremis. The author analyzes the phonetic and derivational peculiarities of four Oguric words, comparing the forms in which they are preserved in Hungarian and in Cheremis. The article concludes that an etymological reconstruction of the Oguric word stock necessitates the use of both databases simultaneously. The result of this reconstruction will provide a network of the rich territorial varieties of Oguric word formation, which was continuous from the 5th until the 16th century.

Klára Agyagási, University of Debrecen, Institute for Slavic Studies. H-4032 Debrecen, Egyetem tér 1, Hungary. E-mail: klara.agyagasi@gmail.com

0. Introduction

It is a well-known fact that the Ancient Turkic language divided into two branches in the Late Ancient period by the differentiation of the *z*-Turkic and *r*-Turkic dialects. While the *z*-Turkic languages left behind a great number of written monuments in different writing systems, the *r*-Turkic languages have no such heritage. Nevertheless a very significant wordstock from the Old Turkic period, stemming from territorial varieties of *r*-Turkic, was conserved by the Hungarian language thanks to Turkic-Hungarian language contacts. Examining the Turkic loanwords in Hungarian as a source for the reconstruction of *r*-Turkic languages has only been known to international Turkological research since 2011. This was the year when András Róna-Tas and Árpád Berta's monograph *West Old Turkic. Turkic loanwords in Hungarian* was published.

The monograph offers the most detailed description of the phonetic, phonological, morphological, and derivational subsystems of the West Old Turkic language available today, on the basis of Old Turkic loanwords in Hungarian. A major merit of this work is that it was able to reconstruct the Ogur language variants of the Old

Turkic period without local written monuments. A significant step forward could be a similarly detailed reconstruction of the historical continuity of the Ogur language, based on the achieved results. In order to solve this task, the Volga Bulgarian loanwords of the Cheremis dialects could serve as a proper source, in addition to the available Chuvash materials. The extension of the research to the Late Middle-Turkic period was possible because of the availability of new source groups from 1997–2001 and 2008, when Ödön Beke's *Cheremis Dialectological Dictionary* (Beke 1997–2001) and Arto Moisio & Sirkka Saarinen's *Tscheremissisches Wörterbuch* (Moisio & Saarinen 2008) were published.

This type of research was started by M. Räsänen. Räsänen published a monograph on the Volga Bulgarian loanwords of the Cheremis dialects in 1920 (Räsänen 1920), but the Volga Bulgarian words he summarized as Chuvash constitute only a minor portion of the words that eventually came into the vocabulary of the Cheremis dialects. The vocabulary entries of “West Old Turkic” quote Räsänen's data, but they do not include the whole Volga Bulgarian supply of loanwords.

The Volga Bulgarian vocabulary preserved in Cheremis could be analyzed in a significantly more exact way now compared to Räsänen's time, firstly, because for meanwhile background studies have been carried out that elucidate the time of appearance of the Cheremis in the Volga region. It turns out to have occurred in the mid-13th century, immediately after the Mongol invasion (cf. Róna-Tas 1982¹). This is the upper chronological limit of the transfer of Volga Bulgarian loanwords into Cheremis. Secondly, Gábor Bereczki published a monograph on Cheremis historical phonetics, based on the research of the vocabulary of Cheremis dialects (Bereczki 1992, 1994). The results of his monograph make it possible to establish the chronological layers of Volga Bulgarian loanwords. Thirdly, owing to professor Róna-Tas's significant achievements, we have a much clearer knowledge of the details of Chuvash historical phonetics, compared to Räsänen's time (cf. Róna-Tas 1982²). Thus, a more exact, phonetically based delimitation of the Volga Bulgarian donor dialects becomes possible (cf. Agyagási 2007).

The Volga Bulgarian vocabulary copied into Cheremis obviously demonstrates the characteristics of the Middle Bulgarian period; nevertheless, it can provide important information about the state of the Western Turkic language in several ways. Such information would be that individual words can make the chronology of certain sound changes more exact, or they can contain such sounds or structures that have been modified in Hungarian via substitution. The Cheremis vocabulary could preserve such Volga Bulgarian roots that entered the Hungarian language only in derived forms. And inversely, certain derived Cheremis words can verify the soundness of such reconstructed derivations which can be established exclusively on the basis of their Hungarian forms. In the Eastern Old Turkic equivalents, different derivational procedures are reflected. It also could be the case that Hungarian and Cheremis received the respective individual words from different dialects of the Ogur language, and this can be proved using phonetic criteria.

It is obvious that the Cheremis dialects did not borrow the same Volga Bulgarian words that came from Ogur dialects into Proto-Hungarian, but we can still document 78 words borrowed by Hungarian and Cheremis alike; see the Appendix. The Cheremis form of Volga Bulgarian words is given in one certain way. It should be noted that the words in Beke's dictionary are displayed according to collecting points from the whole Cheremis dialectal area. The collecting points are given from the easternmost position towards the westernmost one, i.e. from the Perm province and the language of the Bashkirian Cheremis to the mountain Cheremis, up to the Kozmodemjansk collecting point. On my list, usually the easternmost data are shown, as these data preserve the Volga Bulgarian words in their most archaic form. I have carried out the reconstruction of the Volga Bulgarian donor forms that entered Cheremis. This is a preliminary phonetic reconstruction which can be modified in its details. Such details could be when certain Cheremis dialects or subdialects borrowed individual words from different Volga Bulgarian dialects, or when they borrowed them in different periods. As a result, different donor language reconstructions can belong to the data of one dictionary entry. This work may obviously reach its original goal (the reconstruction of the historical continuity of the Ogur language variations) when the etymological research of all the Volga Bulgarian loanwords in the Cheremis vocabulary has been completed.

In the following, I would like to highlight such examples from the list which in a certain sense clarify the etymological background of the West Old Turkic (WOT) words borrowed into Hungarian. I chose examples from the presented material that demonstrate that alongside the variations of the Ogur words that entered Hungarian and are reconstructed for the West Old Turkic period, other phonetic or derivational variants of the very same words existed which were conserved by the Volga Bulgarian dialects and copied by the Cheremis dialects.

1. Middle Turkic (Volga Bulgarian) correspondence of WOT **jɛŋed-* > **jɛyɛd-* 'to conquer'

According to the monograph (Róna-Tas & Berta 2011: 406–409), another secondary form of this word, **jɛyüz-* was borrowed by Hungarian, having three Ogur phonetic criteria. The first is the change of the initial *y-* to *j*, the second is the appearance of a guttural spirant *-ɣ* from *ŋ*, and the third is the final intervocalic voiced spirant *-δ* becoming *-z*. Simultaneously, the variant that is reconstructable by means of the Cheremis language had to exist in West Old Turkic.

WOT **jɛŋed-* > **jɛyɛd-* 'to conquer' (cf. EOT *yāñüz-* < *yāŋ-*)

WOT **jɛyɛd-* > **jɛyüz-* → Hungarian *győz-* [*d'õz-*] (Róna-Tas & Berta 2011: 406).

Moisio & Saarinen's Cheremis data (2008: 624):

OB₁ Mm₂ Mmu *śeŋ-em*

Ob₂ Oka Mwo Mup *seŋ-em* ← VB *śeŋ-* < WOT **jēŋ-*
 W₁ *səŋ-em*

In the root **jēŋ-* we see the conservation of the consonant *ŋ-* that is characteristic of the Eastern Old Turkic equivalent of this word. At the same time, or by the end of the West Old Turkish period, but by the very latest by the early Middle Bulgarian period the spirantization of initial OT *j* took place, which again is an Ogur (Chuvash type) characteristic.

2. Middle Turkic (Volga Bulgarian) correspondence of WOT **köl-če-n* ‘loan’

Its etymology rests upon the present-day Chuvash form *kivśen* ‘loan’ (Ašm. 6: 196) and the Eastern Old Turkic verb *kölü-* ‘to borrow’, and practically no other data are available about it in the written sources or in the modern languages (cf. Róna-Tas & Berta 2011: 582–584). As mentioned in the monograph, the Chuvash word is isolated. This makes it much more difficult to analyze its morphological structure. Ligeti earlier considered the word to go back to a form like *külč* or *külč* + an unidentifiable final labial vowel like **külčv*. He said that the form **külčvn* is derived with an adverbial *-n*, but he could not prove his hypothesis (Ligeti 1986: 45).

Róna-Tas—based on analogies of Chuvash phonetics and word formation—assessed the morphological structure of the Hungarian word’s West Old Turkic correspondent in the donor language as the form **köl-če*.

Beke’s Cheremis data (4:1136):

- a) P B BJ (Birsk vernacular of Cheremis): *küşün*
 M MK (Malmyž vernacular): *küşün* ← VB **kül- čü- n*
 UP CK (Uržum and Joškar Ola vernacular): *küşän*
- b) Č ČN (Čeboksary vernacular): *küşen* ← VB **kül- če-n*
- c) JT (Jaransk vernacular): *küsö*
 JO (Jaransk vernacular): *küşə* ← VB **kül-čü*
 V (Vetluga vernacular): *küsə*
 K (Kozmodemjansk vernacular): *küşə*

Cheremis data display three simultaneous derivational models. According to the first, the Volga Bulgarian variant of the Old Turkish verb *köl-* with the deverbal suffix *-čX* created a noun which was expanded by the adverbial affix *-n*. The second model is the morpho-phonetic variant of the first one. In the third model the verb only took on the suffix *-čX*, but its meaning corresponds with that of the first model. All of this means that Ligeti was right in suspecting the existence of a noun *külčv*, and that Cheremis enriches the otherwise poorly documented history of the word by providing an important data point. It is remarkable that in Cheremis the West Old Turkic cluster *-lč-* regularly corresponds to *ś*.

3. Middle Turkic (Volga Bulgarian) correspondence of WOT **siṇuk* ‘mosquito’

Róna Tas reconstructs the WOT form as **siṇuk*. Although we are aware that in the predecessor of Chuvash the phonemes front and back *i* /i/ és *az* /i/ coincide in the Middle Chuvash period, it seems odd earlier (the shift *si* > *ši* was not yet present in the word) to suggest a word of mixed vowel-structure on the Turkish side. The word came into the Cheremis dialects from Volga Bulgarian in the early Middle Bulgarian period, but in the Cheremis dialectal morphological variants both the front vocalic and back vocalic Volga Bulgarian phonetic version can be identified, separately, and parallel.

WOT **siṇuk* ‘mosquito’ (EOT *siṇäk* id.)

WOT **siṇuk* > **sinuk* → Hungarian *szúnyog* [sűňog] (Róna-Tas & Berta 2011: 822)

Beke’s Cheremis data (7: 2353):¹

- a) P B M C Č šṇa ← VB *šṇa < *siṇa
UP US MK šṇa
- b) JO šṇe
V šṇe ← VB *šṇe < *siṇe
K šṇga

In the forms borrowed by Cheremis the initial *š* is reasonable from both Cheremis and Volga Bulgarian linguistic historical points of view. In the first case the change *si* > *ši* is possible, which can also be seen in other Ogur loanwords of the Hungarian language, e.g. Hung. *seper-* < WOT **sipir-*. In the second case a global Cheremis *s* > *š* change in the 16th century can be considered.

4. Middle Turkic (Volga Bulgarian) correspondence of WOT *čäwiš

In the last example we can see the additional information given by the Volga Bulgarian loanwords of Cheremis accompanied by a peculiar WOT reconstruction. The Hungarian word *csősz* according to Róna-Tas goes back to the WOT form *čäwiš, the EOT equivalent of which is čabiš, čavuš. The Old Turkic noun is proved to be a derivative composed with the help of the suffix -Xš of the verb čav-.

WOT *čäwiš ‘field-guard’ (EOT čabiš, čavuš ‘army commander’)

WOT *čäwiš → Hungarian čäüš > csősz [čős] (Róna-Tas & Berta 2011: 271)

Beke’s Cheremis data (6: 2158):²

¹ See also Moisio & Saarinen 2008: 764.

BJp *saβuš*, MP UP USj *saβǣš* ← VB **šawuš* < **čawiš*
 B *šäüš*, BJ *šauš*, UJ JT *sayus* ← VB **šäwüs* < *čäwülč*, *šawuš* < *čawulč*

In the Ogur phonetic form, I find the -š in the suffix unusual, all the more because the Cheremis dialectal forms conserved the forms of the word in which both the initial and word-final consonants were realized as a palatalized -š, which can more likely point to the word-ending -lč, a phonetic relation characteristic of Ogur languages. At the same time it is a fact that another group of Cheremis dialects contains a word-ending -š, which needs to be explained. I can thank G. Bereczki for this explanation. He suggests that in the dialects with a -š ending, we are likely to encounter the deverbal suffix with the same phonetics and function having inner Finno-Ugric origin. Thus, I think the reconstructed -š in the West Old Turkic form of this suffix can be modified on the grounds of Ogur phonetics.

There is yet much to be done in the investigation of Volga Bulgarian loanwords in the Cheremis vocabulary. Still, the given examples prove that this linguistic material can carry important pieces of information regarding the former history of the Ogur dialects.

Appendix

Ogur words borrowed by Hungarian and Cheremis alike

Hungarian words	Their West Old Turkic reconstructed donor forms	Cheremis words	Their Volga Bulgarian reconstructed donor forms
bán 'a T-Sl title'	*bayan	pojan	*pāyan or *poyan
bársony 'velvet'	*barčun	poršân	*pārsîn or *poršîn
bélyeg 'stamp'	*bäläg < *bäläk	päläk	*päläk
bojtorján 'burdock'	*balturgan	polðêran	*pālturan or polturan
bors 'pepper'	*burč	puruš	*puruš
borsó 'pea'	*burčay	purša	*purša
bőjt 'fast(ing)'	*büytä	pütö	*pütü
bűsz 'vapor'	*bűs	puš	*pus
bűtű 'end of sg'	*bütüy	pütün	*pütün
csabak 'a fish'	Cum *čapV-gAk?	saβ-em	*šap-
csalán 'nettle, Urtica'	*čalīyan	sol-em	*šāl- or šol-
csavar- 'to turn, to steal'	*čäwür-	saβêr-em	*šäwir-

csécs 'smallpox'	*čeč or *čēč < čeček	säskä	*šäskä
csökönyös 'stubborn'	*čikin	čäγân	*čīχīn
csősz 'field-guard'	*čäwiš	saβuš, šäüs	*šawīš and šawüs
dara 'grist'	*tarī or *darī	tar	*tarī
dél 'noon, south'	*tüli or *düli or *tülči	tül	*tüli
disznó 'pig'	*jasnay	šösnä	*šosna
dől- 'to stream down'	*tül- or *dül-	tül-eyen 'Falke'	*tül-
enged- 'to allow'	*äñit- < *äñ-	aβ-em	*äw- < *äg- < *äñ-
érdem 'merit'	*ärdäm	artam	*ärdäm
erő 'power'	*äriγ	erâk	*erik
ész 'reason'	*es(V)	aš	*äs
gyalom 'drag-net'	*jalīm	šilām	*šlām (Chuv.)
gyász 'mourning'	*jas	šüs	*šus
gyeplő 'rein'	*jipliγ	sap	*šäp
gyepű 'borderland'	*jepi	saβe	*šäpē
gyermek 'child'	*järmäk	šamârâk	*šämre
gyertya 'candle'	*jarta	sorta	*šârta or *šorta
gyom 'weed'	*jom	šom	*šom
gyöngy 'pearl'	*jinjü	činze	*čínǰe
győz- 'to conquer'	*jeyeð-	šeñ-em	*šeñ-
iker 'twin'	*ikir	d'äγâr	*yikir
író 'buttermilk'	*iray	öran, oren	*oyran
kecske 'goat'	*käčäkä	kačaka	*käčäkä
komló 'hops'	*kumlay	umula	*χumla
kölcsön 'loan'	*kölčen	küsün	*küsün
köldök 'navel'	*kindik	kêndâk	*kindik
könyv 'book'	*küñiy?	kiñâγa	*kiñikä ← Sl
köpcös 'thick man'	*köpčäk < köp	küp-em	*küp- (Chuv.)
kőrő 'mellow'	*kävräγ	kaura	*käwrä
kun 'Cuman'	*kuwan < kuwa + (A)n	uβa 'dunkelbraun'	*χuwa
kuvasz 'a kind of dog'	Cum. *kowaz < kow-	uβ-em	*χuw-
ocsú 'chaff'	*učoy < uč-	βis-em	*wiš-
örvény 'whirlpool'	*äyirmän < äyir-	aβâr-	*äwēr-
sár 'mud'	*šar	šar	*šar
sarló 'sickle'	*čarlay	sorla	*šarla or šorla

seper- 'to sweep'	*šipir-	šəβər-	*šipir-
sereg 'army'	*čärig	sar	*šär(ě)
sima 'smooth'	*šima	šôma	*šīma
sió 'running water'	*šiw	šu	*šiü
süllő 'zander'	*šilliγ	šôla	*šīla
szál 'raft'	*sāl	šolo	*šāl or šolu
szer 'part of a village'	*šer < čer < ĵer	šer	*šer
szín 'color, face'	*sin	sôn	*sin
szór- 'to winnow'	*sawur- < sav-	šaβ-em	*saw-
szúnyog 'mosquito'	*siŋuk	šôŋa	*siŋa
szűr- 'to filter'	*sür-	šür-em	*sür-
tapló 'tinder'	*topluy < top	top	*top
tarló 'plough field'	*tarīlay	tarla	*tarla
tiló 'hemp breaker'	*talkīγ	tole, tule	*tolă, tulă
tinó 'steer'	*tana	tuna	*tuna (Chuv. V)
törvény 'law'	*törüγän	törä	*törä
űröm 'wormwood'	*erim	arôm	*ärim
vályú 'trough'	*valay	βolak, lak	*wolak, lak < *olak
vék 'a hole in the ice'	*vākü	βake	*wākü

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