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Contacts of Korean and Turkic in the Early Period

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During the last century, much research has been done concerning the affinity of the Korean language and several hypotheses have been proposed. Besides affinity with the Altaic languages, affinity with Japanese, Paleo-Asiatic, Dravidian, and even the Indo-European languages have been proposed. However, the Altaic origin of Korean is corroborated better than any other theory or hypothesis established so far. The outspoken supporters of the Korean-Altaic theory are G. Ramstedt, P. Aalto, K. Menges, Baskakov and R. A. Miller. Most scholars degree supporting the Altaic theory don‘t believe that there is the of relation between the Altaic languages. Proposing the Chuvash-Turkic-Mongolian-Manchu-Tungus unit, N. Poppe maintained that Korean has a more distant relation to the Altaic unit. Ramstedt, the founder of Altaic theory, however, had proposed the theory in his article “Über die Stellung des Korea-nische” that of Altaic languages, Korean, along with being closely related to Tungus, also has the same relation to Turkic. As for the author of these lines, there are many considerable cognates between Korean and Turkic from both the phonological and morphological point of view.¹

On the other hand, besides the cognates not a few Turkic loan-words are found in Korean. In Korean there are two kinds of Turkic loan-words; Turkic loan-words in the earlier period of Korean and Turkic loan-words in Middle Korean in the middle of the 13th century. The latter were borrowed into Ko-

¹ Between Korean and Turkic about 180 common glossaries and 90 common morphological elements are found. More than 90% of these common elements have their own “third witnesses(troisième témoin)”, that are Mongolian or Manchu-Tungus, being three- or four-way correspondences. han-Woo Choi, Korece ile Türkçenin Karşılaştırmalı Morfolojis (Comparative Morphology of Turkic and Korean). Unpublished Dissertation. Ankara 1989.
ean through Mongolian during 60 years Mongolian rule of Korea.

Putting Turkic loan-words in Middle Korean aside, I would like to deal with Turkic loan-words in the earlier period of Korean in this paper. These Turkic loan-words probably belong to Proto or Ancient Turkic. Following are Turkic loan-words in Korea in the Proto or Ancient period:

1. Ko. or ‘duck’: In modern Korean, there is the word or meaning duck, which was probably borrowed from Turkic. The form orh or orhi appears in Middle Korean. In the form orh, /h/ is an additional phoneme which is added to certain noun words in Middle Korean. In the latter form orhi, the suffix -i is a denominational suffix which is very common in Korean. On the other hand, this word appears in the Turkic languages. While in the Yakut language, there is the word in the form of or meaning ‘duck’, Ancient Uyyar has the form ordei with the same meaning (Ligeti 1966: 190). As for the word ordei, Clauson (1972: 205) supposed that the word derived from the verb or ‘rise’ up’ with a deverbal noun suffix -dek. In Turkic, however, we cannot find the suffix -dek. In my opinion, the word ordei is a compound of two different words being hendiadis i.e. or and dek. While the word or is of Turkic, dek is of probable unknown origin.

2. Ko. turumi ‘crane’: turumi is probably a Turkic loan-word in Ancient Korean. In Orkhon Turkic there is turumya ‘crane’. Kashgarli Mahmud contains the word in the form of turna. Of later Middle Turkic languages, Kypchak, Kuman and Osman Turkic have the same word, turna. In many modern Turkic languages, the word occurs; Azeri and Turkmen durna, Özbek turna, Tuva durna and Yakut turuya, etc. From Yakut, the word passed to Evenki turuya. In Japanese the word appears in the form of turu, the last syllable being dropped. It is interesting that the similar form to the Japanese is found in Ural languages, Wotyak turi, Ostyak ta:ra, etc. The word was borrowed from Oguz Turkic to Iranian and Kurdish in the form of durna.

3. Ko. Kakkan ‘a title’: In Silla the title kakkan ( 角千 ACh. kâk-kân) occurs designating a ruler of the tribal confederacy. In Kokurye which is also one of the Ancient Korean states located in the northern parts of Korea, the word kakan ( 角汗 ACh. k’a-yân) appears in the phrase 角汗可汗, designating a god’s name. However, the word originally might mean ruler or emperor. On the other hand, in the Orkhon Inscriptions the title qayn ‘ruler, emperor’ occurs many times. Both kakkan ( 角千 ) and kakan ( 角汗 ) occurring in the ancient Korean might have been borrowed from Proto or Ancient Turkic.

The etymology of the Turkic word qayn is still unknown. However, it is obvious that the word is a compound of qa and qan. The latter one qan, occurs in the Orkhon Inscriptions not a few times designating king or ruler. In Silla, besides the word 千 (qan) being used alone as a title, the word appears in other titles, i.e. 麻立千 marikpan, 居西千 kosskan, 純千 okkan, 逸千 surkan, etc.

As for the title qa which we cannot find in other Altaic languages, it is attested in the titles of Puye state: 馬加 maka ‘horse ruler’, 半加 ceka ‘fig ruler’, 互加 uka ‘bull ruler’ and 狼加 kuka ‘wolf ruler’. In these Puye titles, the word ka means ‘ruler, governor’. The title qa also occurs in two titles of Kokurye, 古難加 kocuka ‘the leader of royal family, prince’ and 相加 saqka ‘a ruler’.

In the Altaic languages, while the titles qa and qan designated leader of a tribe or governor, qayn designated the ruler of tribal confederacy or emperor. Actually, if we translate qayn literally, it means ‘king of kings’.

The word qayn occurs in Tabghach or T’opa language which is considered as Proto-Turkic in the form of 白汗, designating the ruler of T’opa.

The Proto or Ancient Turkic word qayn was borrowed into many other languages. In the middle Persian document Mahmamag, the form qayn is attested. Besides Persian, in many other non-Altaic languages the word was borrowed, including Tibet, Uralic, and European languages. (See Doerfer IV: 1161).

4. Ko. coc ‘an adult’s penis’: Though in historical documents of Korean it is not attested because of its particular meaning, the word coc probably have being existed from Ancient Korean so far. The Uzbek language has cocqag meaning ‘a boy’s penis’. The word cocqag consists of the stem coc and -aq which is a diminutive suffix, e.g. Uyg. yulaq ‘a small brook, a small spring’ < yul ‘brook, spring’, MK känk ‘a container made of leather (< "a small leather object") < kän ‘a tanned leather’, etc. On the other hand, in Korean

2 Silla kingdom was an ancient Korean state and was located in the south-eastern parts of Korea.
3 Kim Yu-Sin, a hero of Silla, who played a main role to unify Korean states in the peninsular and established the Unified Silla Kingdom, was entitled with 太大角千 ‘The Greatest Kagan’.
there is the word caci meaning 'the penis'. This word might be derived from coc with the suffix -i which is a very productive denominal suffix.

7. Ko. bora 'snowstorm': In Korean this word is used only with nun meaning 'snow' in the form of nunbora 'snowstorm'. This word occurs in the Orkhon Inscriptions in the form of bor 'snowstorm, rainstorm'. Chagatay has the form borayn which was borrowed from Mongolian. This word also occurs in modern Turkic languages; Trkm. borà:n 'snowstorm', KzK. boran id., Tuv. bora:n id., Tat. buran, etc. However, these are all borrowed from Mongolian. Interestingly, Anatolian Turkish has the form bora meaning 'storm'. The Turkish form is a result of paragoge. On the other hand, besides bora Kazak has the verb bora- 'to storm'. This form confirms that the proto form of the word is *bor. In Turkic, the suffix -a is a denominal verb suffix.

Among Altaic languages, Written Mongolian has the cognate of the word in the form of boroyan meaning 'storm'. In Evenki the form burkan meaning 'snowstorm' is attested.

7. Ko. cokha 'nephew': As far as I know, there are no traces of this word in either Mongolian or Manchu-Tungus. However, it is attested in the Orkhon Inscriptions in the form of cigan meaning 'nephew, son of one's aunt'.

8. Ko. toqa 'strong, string': This word occurs only in the phrase toq a cur meaning 'a thick and strong cord or string' (cur 'string, cord'). The word toqa is very common in Old and Middle Turkic. In the 12th century, Kashgarli Mahmud stated in his dictionary that the word originally meant 'tiger'. Maintaining that Kashgarli's statement is not yet confirmed by any other researcher, Clausen (1972: 515) suggests 'hero, outstanding warrior' or the like for the meaning. Ibnū Mūhenna gives 'strong, hard' as opposed to 'weak' in his dictionary. On the other hand, this word appears in Chinese sources as a title name of Turkic tribe, consisting of two Chinese characters; 同俄 (ACh. d'ung-nga, Sino-Ko. toqa). Evenki has the word in the form of tuqa meaning 'bandage, string'.

10. Ko. tor 'hero, duck': In an ancient source, the title *tor appears, in the name sobartori (蘇伐都利) who was a leader of an ancient Korean village Koha (古壕) of Silla. In another ancient Korean source, this name is written as 蘇伐公 in Chinese. In the source the word tori (< *tor) was translated by the Chinese word Kung 公 meaning 'prince, duke'.

The word tor is attested in the Ancient Turkic title bayator meaning 'hero'. As for the word bayator, we find the word in a Runic manuscript from Miran and Tunhuang in Eastern Turkestan. I think that this word consists of two words: bay and tor. The word baya is probably the same word as baqa 'frog, toad'. In Turkic, the phonetic change of [j] and [/j] is very common between vowels, e.g. Uyg. MK buqa ‘bull’, Chap. byya id., Kum. boya id. Actually, the word baqa in Uygur is attested in the form of başa in both Kyrgyz and Osman. Here we can deduce that the word bayator might mean 'prince of toads or frogs' or the like, designating a hero metaphorically.

It is not surprising that baya in the word bayator is the same as the word baqa meaning 'toad or frog'. As is well known, in the ancient period, Huynu and Turkic peoples took their titles from animals' names, e.g. baqa tarqan 'ruler of frogs', boqa qaran 'king of bulls', bori qaran 'king of wolves', sonkor tigin 'prince of hawks', etc. This tradition seems to have something to do with their totemism. We can find this kind of example in our own ancient state Puye. In the Puye state, the ruling organization of the state was based on the four-governors system under the reign of ruler-king. We call the system Sachultö 四出道 meaning 'four out-way'. The four governors' titles took after animal names, i.e. horse, bull, pig and wolf. It is very interesting that, although the animal toad never seems to be a symbol of hero or warrior, we Koreans also have the term 'Tukkobi Chang'kun (將軍)' meaning 'warrior or hero of toads' literally. This term must be a Korean translation of

many cases. However, in this case, we can determine the vowel from the Chinese transliteration of the words 都利(tori). See the article, Choi Han-Woo, "On the determination of labial vowels of Ancient Turkic", Central Asian Journal, Vol. 35: 1-2, pp. 41-53.

5 The word bayator occurs in an Uygur text in the two forms; Uyg. (USP 22: 18) bayator and Uyg. (THS IV: 12) bator. Kuman has the form baatur meaning 'brave man'. On the other hand, this Turkic word was borrowed into Mongolian; Mo. bayator 'hero, warrior', MMo. baatur id. In Middle Korean, there is pator 'hero, warrior' which was borrowed from Mongolian in the 13th century. The word bator (< *bayator) in Mongol continues in the name of capital city of the Mongol Republic, Ulan Bator.

6 On the other hand, the word baqa is not of Turkic origin, but of Chinese origin; compounded of ACh. ma 蝦 > M. ma, C. ma ‘frog’, Sino-Jap. ba id. (Giles 7590), Sino-Ko. ma id., and ACh. ra 蝦 > M. ha’, C. ha ‘frog, toad’, Sino-Jap. ka id. (Giles 4199), Sino-Ko. ha id. cf. Mo. baxa ‘frog, toad'.

4 Most scholars read the Turkic word bayator with the last vowel being /j/, not /i/. Actually it is very difficult to determine the exact qualities of Proto-Turkic labial vowels in
the Turkic term *bayator* ‘hero of toads’.

On the other hand, the word *tor* which is not attested except in the word *bayator* in Turkic, continues in Korean in the form of *tori* (< *tor* + denominal suffix -i) meaning ‘a brave boy’ or the like.

11. Ko. *wari* ‘a dog like wolf’: In the southern parts of Korea, people call a big and wild dog like wolf *wari*. This word occurs in the Orkhon Inscriptions, which is the oldest Turkic inscriptions, in the form of *börü* meaning ‘wolf’ in the sentence *börü tey ermis* “(the kagan) was like a wolf” (KT E 12, BK E 11). The word also was used in the proper name Er *Börü* ‘male wolf’, as well as in the title *Börü Kaşan* ‘the king of Wolves’ in Ancient Turkic. The word *börü* is attested in most of the historical languages of Turkic, i.e. Uyghur, Karahan, Chagatay, etc. in the form of *börü* or *börü*. The word which, as far as I know, never occurs in both Mongolian and Manchu-Tungus, was borrowed into non-Altaic languages, i.e. Yenisey Ostyak *börü* and Russian *börük*, etc. (Doerfer II 784).

**ABBREVIATIONS**

ACH.: Ancient Chinese


1. In his work “A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic” (Bloomington, 1968) our esteemed colleague Talat Tekin explains the Ancient Turkic (T)word *balbal* ‘statue’, assuming a syncope, < *balbal* < *barimal* (p. 73). On p. 99 he explains the word as deriving from *barmal*, comparing with it 13/14th century Yüan Mongolian (Y) *barimal* (progressive distance assimilation -m > -b-) and, some lines further, by a regressive distance assimilation: *balbal* < *balmal* < *barmal*. The common feature of these alternative explanations is the derivation from Y *barimal*, which in some fashion developed into *balbal*.

2. I entirely agree with Tekin that the T word is of Mongolian (Mo.) origin. Cf. Y *barimal* ‘sculpture’, consisting of the root *bari*- ‘to construct, to shape’ + a well-known suffix -mal. This form, however, must not be the direct predecessor of *balbal*. I am inclined to prefer a development from proto-Mo. *barmal* > *barmal* (in an ancient Mo. dialect) → T *balbal* (with double assimilation: -r- to -l- and -m- to -b-). This means (1) there are ancient Mo. loanwords in T, and (2) they do not coincide with Y. For particulars cf. A = my article “Mongolica im Alttürkischen” (submitted to Lewin-Festschrift in March 1988, forthcoming) and B = Mongolo-Tungusica, Wiesbaden 1985, 148-198.

3. But from which Mo. dialect are the T words derived? With certainty it is not Y (not documented before the 13th century). One may assume that Y was the particular dialect of Činggis Khan’s tribe, which by its political dominance has suppressed all other dialects - with the exception only of Daghir (D), which has gone its own way, divergent from Y.

In this article we shall take the following languages into account (cf. the