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*Primary *h- in Mongol?*

by

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I.

All science has an α and an ω ; the α is “I don’t know”, and the ω is “I’ve been wrong”. In this spirit, I constantly try to check my views and, in some cases, change them, jettisoning former opinions.

Therefore I salute William Rozycki’s article *Primary *h- in Mongol: the Evidence Considered* (CAJ 38, 1994, 71–79) as a welcome occasion to scrutinize pp. 150–151 of my book MT (= *Mongolo-Tungusica*, Wiesbaden 1985).

Before embarking on this topic, it may be useful to mention that for some years I have changed my opinion on Mongol-Turkic and Mongol-Tungus relationships. Whereas I originally proposed an early flow in one direction only, from TU (Turkic) → MO (Mongolian) I now consider that early ME (Manchu-Evenki = Tungus) elements have also entered MO and that there are early MO elements in TU as well. Characteristic for the early MO layer in TU are, for example, terms for horse colors, camel breeding and titles, whereas MO terms for aquatic animals have for the most part been derived from ME. But the Samoyed element in MO and TU (with typically Siberian terms, such as *päimå* ‘felt boot’ → MO *hoyima-sun*, TU *oyma*, Manchu *fomon*) must also be considered. This is a broad field of cultural and linguistic connections, the investigation of which is still at an early stage. The following articles contain my revised opinions.

A. “Terms for Aquatic Animals in the Wu Ti Ch’ing Wên Chien”, *Proceedings of the International Symposium on B. Pilsudski’s Phonographic Records*, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan,

1985, 191–202. (ME terms for aquatic animals → MO and then TU; on p. 190, line 4, “Turkic” should be corrected to “Tungus”).

B. “Mongolica im Alttürkischen”, Bruno Lewin zu Ehren, Festschrift aus Anlaß seines 65. Geburtstages, III, Korea, *Bochumer Jahrbücher* 14, Bochum, 1992, 39–56. (MO words of pre-Yuan origin: Xian-bei, Toba, Liao).

C. “The older Mongolian layer in Ancient Turkic”, Türk Dilleri Araştırmaları, 3, Ankara, 1993, 79–86. (The structure of pre-Yuan MO words and their correspondences in TU, Manchu, later MO and Daghur.)

D. “Türkische Farbbezeichnungen und Pferdezzucht”, *CAJ* 39, 1995, 1–20. (Pre-Yuan MO terms for horse breeding in TU.)

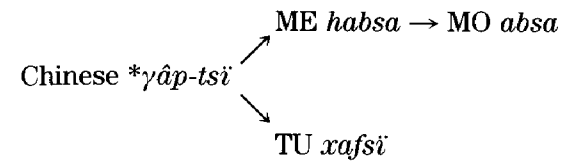
E. “The recent development of Nostraticism”, forthcoming in *Indogermanische Forschungen*. (Chapter 1.6 contains an investigation of the correspondences of ME *h- and *k- in MO.)

Here is my evaluation of Rozycki’s arguments.

(1) I think (cf. D and E) that the connection MO *ayta* ‘gelding’ = TU *hat* is hardly deniable. As to Nanay, Orok *hakta* I now prefer to assume that h- may be secondary in the Nanay group, namely formed in analogy to *hakpa-* ‘to rip off’, *hapka* ‘ripped off’, i. e., **akta* > *hakta*.

(2) As I already mentioned in MT, MO *absa* is presumably a loan from ME; -*sa* is a suffix used very frequently in ME (cf. J. Benzing, *Die tungusischen Sprachen*, Wiesbaden 1955, § 79). There are also semantic reasons (basket of birch bark) in favor of this assumption. The role of Siberian elements of various origins in MO has still to be clarified (cf. supra). The sporadic loss of K- in Qipčaq cannot be adduced as proof of a Latin origin (*capsa*), particularly since K- > Ø- is not usual in modern Qipčaq dialects. It is more likely that Mamluk-Qipčaq *absa* is a loan from MO (*al-Tuhfat al-zakiyya*, 14th century, contains other MO loanwords, too, e. g., *maqta-* ‘to praise’, *nöker* ‘comrade’). Under these circumstances the loan-direction ME → MO → TU seems to be most probable. (There are other examples of this kind, e. g., *laqa* ‘a kind of fish’.)

But, on the other hand, another possibility exists: ME **habsa* may be a loan from older Chinese **γâp-tsi* ‘box’ (as was already presumed by Pelliot, cf. III). This same Chinese word may have entered both ME and TU, although under different conditions, therefore producing different results:



For the time being, I am inclined to prefer this explanation.

(3) Cf. to this topic Doerfer: “Die Körperteilbezeichnungen des Kili”, *NyK* 86, 1984, 242: ME *hâb-tâ* ‘lung’ has to be discerned from **hâb-ti-lâ* ‘rib’, and also from MO *öbčîn* ‘cuirass’ (cf. Doerfer: *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, I, Wiesbaden 1963, § 6), and finally from MO *ebče’ün* ‘sternum, chest’. It is possible that ME **hâb-ti* → MO **ebči* with the secondary addition of -*GUn*, just as in – or analogous to – *omori’un* ‘sternum, breast’, corresponding to TU *omuz* or *omöz* ‘shoulder’ (or the lower part of it?); the suffix -*ti* is frequent in ME.

(4) To MO *erü-* ‘dig’ = ME **härü-* ‘to dig snow’ Rozycki points out that “this correspondence is acceptable as evidence of *h in Mongol”. However, ‘to dig snow’ may also be the original meaning of the word, thus its origin may be found not only in ME, but also in Siberia, cf. supra.

(5) I agree with Rozycki that MO *oyo-da-sun* is presumably a loan from ME. It may come from Manchu, where -*da-* is a frequent and early suffix, cf. also Jurchen = Manchu *orho-da* ‘gin-seng’, from *orho* ‘plant’.

(6) MO *ebde-* ‘destroy’ = Nanay *xepuli-*, etc. The ME word with x- (recte h-) is not only attested in Nanay, cf. O. P. Sunik: *Ul’čskij jazyk*, Leningrad 1985, 255 *xepu xepu tavu* ‘razrušat’, razbivat’.

The whole problem remains difficult, as I already hinted in MT, with reference to word number 10.

I thank Dr. Rozycki for his well-founded criticism. As I pointed out in A, we must also assume that early ME elements have entered MO. These ME elements with *h- found no counterpart in MO, where no *h- existed, and so were replaced (just as Hamburg in German has become Amburgo in Italian). I think that, for semantic reasons, (1) is a MO loan in ME (with secondary h- in the Nanay group), whereas (2)–(5) are ME loans in MO, and (6) may be a random case. Videant posteriores. Has an earlier *h- (earlier than h- < *p-) at some time been pronounced in MO? This may

depend on the idiolects, of which we have no knowledge. Just as many Germans are able to pronounce the English *j* (*Jim*), others are not and prefer *ch* (*Chim*, e.g., *Chim Connors*).

II.

My opinions differ from those expressed in Rozycki's book, *Mongol Elements in Manchu*, Bloomington 1994 in more than one hundred cases. Here are some examples: Manchu *hirha-* 'shear off' cannot be "Early MO", since then **hiĵa-* would be expected (whereas **kirha-*, assimilated to *hirha-*, i.e. *xirxa-*, is likelier). Some comparisons (above all, those marked as "pre-loan") are dubious, e.g., *gosihon* 'bitter' (ME **goti*) ~ MO *gasiyun*. Why *o* = *a*? Nor do I see a reason for "pre-loan" Manchu *tele-* ~ MO *tele-*. Why should this not be a loan? Of course, one cannot exclude the loanway ME → MO. Generally speaking, Rozycki has not given any definition which distinguishes loans and pre-loans. Can these be defined? If so, does this mean: a) genetically related words – or: b) words from a third (original) source (both MO and ME ← X and not MO ← ME or ME ← MO) – or: c) words inexplicable *in puncto* origin? I suppose the definition behind these comparisons is "What is not explicable is called 'pre-loan'".

III.

In this context it may be appropriate to comment briefly on a much older article dealing with *K-* ~ zero in TU and MO: This is Paul Pelliot's "Les formes avec et sans *q-* (*k-*) en turc et en mongol", *T'oung Pao* 37, 1944, 73–101. Pelliot gives 7 examples for TU *q-* = MO zero: (1) TU *qolan* 'saddle-girth' (~ *qolaŋ!*) = MO *olang*; (2) TU *qotaz* 'yak' (~ *qotoz*) = MO *otas*; (3) TU *Kāšyari xafsī* 'a small box' = MO *absa*; (4) TU *qarbuḥ* 'water-melon' = MO *arbus*; (5) MO *qabirga* 'flank' ~ MO *abit*, plural of **abisun* 'rib' (Lessing: *abid* 'intestines'); (6) MO *kituga* 'knife' ~ MO (Kal-muck) *utxä*; (7) MO *qarbing* 'fat on the abdomen of an animal, big belly' ~ MO *arbing*. The following evaluation of these terms may be correct:

(1) and (2) are MO loans in TU. Many animal terms, particularly those of horse and camel breeding, have a Mongolian origin, as I have proven in D. Here, *earlier* MO words with *h-*, such as **holang*, **hotas*, may have been loaned by TU. In TU, *-s* in words consisting of more than one syllable is unusual, therefore *-s* > *-z* is understandable. (3) *Kāšyari xafsī* ← Chinese **yâp-tsi* seems to be correct, this word has no direct connection with MO *absa* (cf. supra). (4) *arbus* ← Persian *xarbūz(a)*, cf. the fact that in Slavic *arbuḥ* is also usual; no direct connection with a TU word can be attested. (5)–(7) are inner-MO developments. For (5) we may compare *qabirga* 'rib, flank' and *qabisun* 'rib', but also 'uterus, womb'. *Qabisun* is analogous to *qabirga*, this being an established derivation from the earlier *qarbisun*, cf. (7). For (6) cf. also Ordos *utaga*, Oirat (Zwick 78) *utuyai* ~ John R. Krueger: Materials for an Oirat-Mongolian to English Citation Dictionary, Bloomington 1978, 166 *utuyā*. This seems to be analogous to *utul-* 'to cut off'. (Oirat *madaga*, cited by Rašid al-Dīn, is another word.) (7) *arbing* 'big belly' has been formed in analogy with *arbi* 'abundance', *arbin* 'plentiful, abundant'. That is to say, (5)–(7) are not phonetic phenomena, but examples of analogy, so important a factor in the development of languages.