ON SOME ALTAIC NAMES OF DWELLINGS

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The Altaic languages¹ do not have names of dwellings of common origin, spread in all or in most of the languages concerned. One of the few exceptions is Ev. V 471² ḥarān place for a dwelling, place for the hearth, fireplace; yurt, dwelling; encampment; bed⁶, Ev. B 57 ḥarān a place owned by somebody, Ev. B 57 ḥarām a place abandoned by the inhabitants, a place from which people have moved to another place, a place in which a yurt used to be before, Lam. C 458⁴ ḥarān sleeping places = MT⁵ aran stables, Tob., Kūr., Bar., Chag., Kar. aran santeroom, yard, cow-sheds⁸ = Mo. aran


² Evenki (Tungus) after G. M. Vasilevič, Єvenkijsko-russkij slovar, Moskva 1958. The numbers refer here and elsewhere to pages.

³ Evenki of Bargažin after N. N. Poppe, MATERIAL Dlya issledovaniya tungusekogo yazyka, Narečie barguzinskix tungusov, Leningrad 1927.

⁴ Lamut (Even) after V. I. Gnečius i L. D. Ričes, Russko-événjskij slovar, Moskva 1952.

⁵ Middle Turkic after Mahmoud al-Kăşghari, vide Besim Atalay, Divanu Lüğat-it-türk dizini in Endeks, Ankara 1943, p. 31.

⁶ Unless the source is indicated, the Turkoic forms are always quoted from Radloff's dictionary.
people, MMO. *karan < CA *parān. It should be remarked, in defense of this etymology established by Ramstedt, who compared the words in question with Korean param wall, partition wall, that the semantic divergence dwelling, yard and people should not raise doubts in view of Latin domus, Greek δομος house, Ionian δομος prisoner of war, servants' δομωρία maid servants, and Cretan μυσας serfs. It should also be added that the MMO. term karan referred mostly to ordinary, subordinated people. But this word is one of the few exceptions, and most words for all kinds of dwellings occur only in few Altaic languages, not having cognates in other Altaic languages and being strictly regional terms. Suffice it to say that Turkic *āb > āb, əb, ֠ āb, āb, āb house is not found in all Turkic languages: whereas it occurs in all the proper Turkic languages with the exception of Yakut, it does not occur in Chuvash. It is also unknown in Mongolian and in the Manchu-Tungus languages.

32 G. J. Ramstedt, Studies in Korean Etymology, Helsinki 1949, p. 190. Tsatinus compares the Tungus and Lamut forms with Neg. palan flooring, Oroc. pala id., Orok. pala id., Ul. Nan. pala id. Cf. Prof. V. I. Cincius, Sravnițenfaya fonetika tungusso-maččurskix yazykov, Leningrad 1949, p. 156. This comparison raises, however, doubts in view of the correspondence r = l which otherwise does not occur and is not explained in Cincius’s book. Mr. Uneccechin of the University of Washington told me that in his native dialect, Khorehin, flooring is also palan. The origin of this word being obscure, I chose to exclude Neg. etc., palan and Khorehin palan from discussion.
3 Proper Turkic languages are z- and l-languages, descendants of the z-dialect of Proto-Turkic, Chuvash is an r- and l-language, a descendant of the r-dialect of Proto-Turkic.
3 Unless this word can be connected with MMO. c’ede Zeltgerüst, Tärrahmen, cf. E. Haenisch, Wörterbuch zu Monghol un niuca tobe’an [Yün-

Some regional terms for dwellings have been discussed in literature, e.g., Mo. ayil < CA *agil snyder, family, neighbor = Turkic ayil, un, etc. enclosure, village, etc. ; MMO. geyid < CA *gebid dwellings = Cuman kebit shop > Mo. k’ebid shop and Russian kibitka snyder. Some terms are borrowings from one language into another language, e.g., Yak. jia house < Mongolian jige.

In this article a few more Altaic terms will be dealt with.

1. Buriat söl.

Bur. söl Alar, Tunka house, Tunka wall of the house, Alar, Bokhan stoves has no cognates in other Mongolian languages. It is mentioned but not explained in Sanzhev’s comparative grammar. Although it is an isolated word in Buriat, it has, however, cognates in Turkic.

It is known that Bur. s goes back to CMo. c. Consequently, the older form must have been *cöl. It has been also established that long ə originated either from *o or *u, γ standing for *b, *ch’o pi-shi], Geheime Geschichte der Mongolen, Wiesbaden 1922, p. 42. The form c’ede may have originated from *c’éde which may be a derivation from *be = Turkic āb house. The element -de in c’ede being obscure, this comparison cannot be regarded as doubtful.
34 N. Poppe, Jakutische Etymologien, UAJb 23 (1961), pp. 136–137.
36 G. D. Sanzhev, Sravnițenfaya grammatika mongolskij yazykov, t. 1, Moskva 1953, p. 47.
38 N. Poppe, The Groups *u and *ge in Mongol Languages, SI 14: 8 (1950).
and some other consonants in weak position. From this the conclusion can be drawn that *söl < *šöl must have developed either from *čugol or *čubol, i.e., in the same manner as CA *čupākur > CMo. *čubāquir > Bur. sögor *metley, dappled = Özbek ēigor id.; CA *kubol > CMo. *quādā > Ordos ču *yellow, pale = Tel., Shor., Soyot qudu *paile, etc.

The Turkic word corresponding to Bur. söl *house, stoves is Kür. čual *chimney, smoke-pipe, Bash. siwal < *čubal *kind of a fireplace or an ancient stove.

Bur. söl *house and (original meaning) stoves is a regular development of *čubal = Turkic *čubal > Kür. čual *chimney. It occurs also as a loan-word in Russian: čual *fireplace, hearth, the front side of a Russian stove with the chimneys.

2. Buriat urasa.

Bur. urasa ka conic hut* corresponds to Kalm. urtsa *shut, tent without a smoke-opening in the roofs. Otherwise this word is little known in Mongolian. It corresponds to Yak. urasa (pronounced as uraha) *summer-dwelling in the shape of a high conic hut made of rods covered with birch-bark or skins; a transportable hut or tent; the carcass or framework of an urasa; rods put together in the shape of a cone. As far as it is known, no other Turkic language has this term.

Yak. urasa may be connected with Yak. urayas *rod, shafts of an ox cart, poles of a yurt, fences. Yak. ura *chimney, the top of a summer yurt (uras) with an opening for the purpose of letting the smoke out is certainly to be regarded as cognate with urasa. The fact that Yakut has urasa, ura, and urayas makes the assumption that urasa might be a borrowing from Mongolian rather improbable. It should be added that Kalužinski does not list it as a loan-word taken from Mongolian.


The suffixes present in the forms discussed above are, to a large extent, known. Mongolian -ča ( > Bur. -ça) and Turkic -ča is a diminutive suffix. It is unproductive in Mongolian but occurs, i.a., in Mo. orča < *örča *diaphragm from Mo. or ča, MMD. or ča *inside, minda. Mo. urča, Khu. ści ča, Kalm. čta çacrum from *μπα, etc. It is productive in Turkish, e.g., Özb. -ča in kitöča *small book, oçoča dillite foot, etc. Karakalpak -ča in ǰoča *small roads, quča *little box, etc.*

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4. Max Vasmer, Russisches etymologisches Wörterbuch, Bd. 2, Heidelberg 1955, p. 359. The present article has originated from a paper read at the Inner Asia Seminar, University of Washington. During the discussion of this paper, Professor O. Pritsak suggested to connect Kür čual with MT čučol (Besim Atały, op. cit., p. 162) țents. Being unable to explain the different endings of čual and čučol and the difference in meanings (stove, house — țents), I hesitate to accept this comparison. I wish to remark, however, that other suggestions made by Professor Pritsak have been accepted with appreciation.
4. Čeremisinov, op. cit., p. 487.
As for Yak. -гэ, it occurs as an unproductive suffix on a number of verbal stems,\(^1\) occurring also in other Turkic languages, e.g., in Turkish,\(^2\) Karakalpak,\(^3\) etc. Although it forms nouns and adjectives from verbal stems, it occurs also on some noun stems, e.g., Chag. аркăч e-buck from ар e-imalо.\(^4\)

3. Turkic *öpay.

MT oba (probably оба) \(^5\) *tribes,\(^6\) Turkm. оба village,\(^7\) Cuman оба hill,\(^8\) Crim., Osm., Chag. oba 

Аz. oba *hut of herdsmen, all going back to *öpay;\(^9\) Kaz., Shor., Кăлăр, Койб. оба *heap of stones, cairn, Sag. оба tombstone, Alt., Tel. obo cairns, correspond to Mo. oboya < CA *öpagâ, Bur. obô, Kh. oos, Kalm. oos cairn, landmark, frontier mark, heap of stones made in honour of mountain-ghosts.

Whereas Turkm. оба and Chag., Az., etc. oba are regular correspondences to Mo. oboya and go back to *öpay, Kaz., Shor., etc. obа and Alt. obо are obvious borrowings from Mongolian, this being evident from the final long vowel in obа / obо and from the meaning cairn which is identical with that of the Mongolian forms.

Another form, namely *öpak, is found in Mo. obog, and Kh. obog *clan\(^8\) which has the suffix -*k.

An interesting word is Mo. oboyaqai *a conic roof; a yurt consisting of the upper part of a normal yurt, placed directly on the ground, a hut, Kh. oboq̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱...
words taken from other Turkic languages because of the intervocalic t which, after an original long vowel, results in d in the languages in question. In Turkmenian it should have resulted in *əda if it had not been borrowed from another Turkic language. Yak. ota is also a borrowing because Yakut preserves the long vowels, and *ə would have developed to wo. Yak. ota was, furtheron, borrowed by Lamut which also has ota shut and bonfires.

The primary stem of *oτay is CT *öτ fire. The suffix -γ is here on *öta which is a verb formed with the suffix -α. Consequently, *öta- must have had the meaning of making fire, heating, or burning. There is the verb ota- in Tar., Chag., ET to graze, to be on the pastures which is formed from ota-shay-, but the verb *öta- to make fire has disappeared, the result being that ota- etc. might have been reinterpreted as being a noun derived from ota- to graze, i.e., as a hut which is made for herdsmen on or near the pasture, like yailau, Kaz. jaijaum summer-dwelling from yaila-jaila- to spend the summers from yailajai summers. However, ota- is to be regarded, for phonetical reasons (> oda) as a noun formed from *öta-, ultimately from *öτ fire.

The Turkic words discussed have further parallels in Mongolian: Bur. otoq shut made of branches on a meadow, Tumet ö'tok villages, Kh. ö'tök group of yurts, clan, group of hunters; extinguished hearth, ashes and coals remaining after a bonfire, a place in which a bonfire was some time ago. Kalm. ö'tök clan, Mo. otoq group of yurts, clan and traces of an old fire, like Lam. ota shut and bonfire, thus corroborating the etymology *oτay < *öτ fire + -α + CA -γ.

Mongolian has preserved other words derived from *öτ fire: cf. Mo. odōγin youngest son < *öτ fire + tiğin prince, a borrowing from Ancient Turkic; Mo. oqan youngest son, deity of fire <

*öτ fire + qan khan, also a borrowing from Turkic; Mo. oči < *oči < CA *oči sparkling (like Turkic očaq fireplaces < *öτ fire + suff. -eq). The word *oτay is also found in Tungus but there it is a borrowing from Mongolian, cf. Ev. Nerchinsk otoq outdoor lavatory, Ev. Nerch. and B otoq hut made of bark or grass. It also occurs as a loan-word in Sayan Samoyed. As for Titov's opinion that otoq is of Sogdian origin, it lacks supporting evidence.

In conclusion, it may be remarked that the Altaic languages possess a number of words for dwellings. The etymologies of most of them are obscure. Thus, Lam. C 689 has unγn yurt (also čra unγn) and Olekma Ev. V 449 has unγnγn covers of a yurt which correspond to Mo. unγn, Kh. unγ nords of the roof of a yurt, Bur. unγ < CMo. *unγ-ga id. It is hard to say whether nords for the roof or yurt is the primary meaning and what the primary stem *unγ was.

As for the few words discussed in this article, two of them reflect the idea of fire or hearth. These are Bur. söl and Turkish oda. Further investigation might tell what the origin of Turkic *öβ, Mongolian ger, and some other words is.

1 N. Poppe, Zum Feuerkultus bei den Mongolen, Asia Major 1 (1925), p. 132.
2 Vasilevič, op.cit., p. 329.
3 Poppe., Materiali diya isledovaniya tungusskogo yazika, p. 52.
6 Luvsandendev, op.cit., p. 457.
7 Ceremisov, op.cit., p. 482.