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TURKIC *tiš*, CHUVASH *šäl* AND MONGOLIAN *šidün*

By Talat Tekin, Ankara

Türk'e ve Türk diline gönül veren, ilmi  
ve nezaketi ile Türklerin gönlünü  
fetheden örnek insan, seçkin hoca ve  
aziz dost Andreas TİETZE'ye: nice nice  
yillara ve araştırmalara!

In his article entitled "A Lexicostatistical Appraisal of the Altaic Theory" (*CAJ*, XIII, 1969, 1—23), the late Sir Gerard CLAUSON claimed that the Turkic and Mongolian words for "tooth", i. e., Trk. *tiš* and Mo. *šidün*, like many other "basic" words, were not etymologically related. Opponents of the Altaic theory seem to have welcomed this claim regarding it as another irrefutable proof of their opinion. After all, even RAMSTEDT, the founder of the Altaic theory, did not dare to equate Trk. *tiš* to Mo. *šidün*!

Contrary to what CLAUSON thought and the opponents of the Altaic theory still believe, I hold the view that Trk. *tiš* and Mo. *šidün* are etymologically related to each other, i. e., they are cognates, as I have already pointed out elsewhere<sup>1</sup>. In this paper, I will try to prove the etymological relationship between these two words.

As is known, the Chuvash equivalent of C(ommon) T(urkic) *tiš* "tooth" (< \**tīš*; cf. Yak. *tīs* id., Trkm. *dīš* id.) is *šäl*. With its final /l/, Chuv. *šäl* fits the Chuvash-Turkic sound correspondence *l:š* perfectly. Yet the initial /š/ in Chuv. *šäl* causes some difficulties in explaining the relationship of this word to Trk. *tiš*; because the initial /š/ in Chuv. *šäl* goes back to /s/, not to /t/. The proto-Chuvash or proto-Bulgarian form of Chuv. *šäl* may therefore be reconstructed only as \**säl*. This hypothetical form is indeed quite different from CT *tiš* (< \**tīš*). It was probably for this reason that RAMSTEDT did not regard Trk. *tiš* and Chuv. *šäl* as cognates<sup>2</sup>. But, as will be seen below, the occurrence of /s/ in proto-Chuvash *säl* can be explained easily and satisfactorily.

<sup>1</sup> "Further Evidence for Zetacism and Sigmatism," *Researches in Altaic Languages*, ed. by L. LIGETI, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest 1975, pp. 275—284.

<sup>2</sup> RAMSTEDT compared Chuv. *šäl* with Trk. *sīš*, *šīš*, *šīš* "Bratspiess" and Tung. *sila*- "am Spiess braten", *silawün* "Spiess" (I, p. 108).

The Chuvash form *šāl* (< \**sīl*) enables us to assume that there were, in pre-Turkic, some cases in which the initial /t/ alternated with /s/. We indeed have quite a few examples testifying to this assumption. First of all, one remembers the word *sulaq* “spleen” in MK’s dictionary. Kašgarī cites it as a Kipchak form corresponding to CT *talaq* (< \**tālaq*; cf. Trkm. *dālak* id., Yak. *tāl* id.). Kašgarī’s statement about *sulaq*’s being a Kipchak form, however, cannot be correct. The form *sulaq* looks like Bulgarian rather than Kipchak. As a matter of fact, this form with initial /s/ survives only in Chuvash *sula* “spleen” (< *sulaq*).

One also remembers Tat., etc. *šilta-* “to excuse oneself, to find a pretext”, Bash. *hīlta-* id. (cf. Uig., CC, etc. *tīlta-* id.), Tat., etc. *tīltaw* “excuse, pretext”, Bash. *hīltaw* id. (cf. Uig. *tīltay* id., MK *tīlday* id.). These forms with initial /s/ also occur in Mongolian, cf. Mo. *šilta-* “to be a cause or reason, be caused by; to pretend, simulate, find a pretext”, *šiltaj*, *šiltagan* “cause; excuse, pretext”. If Mo. *šilta-* and its derivatives are loanwords borrowed from Turkic, they then must have been borrowed from a Turkic language or dialect in which these words occurred with initial /s/, because Uig., etc. *tīlta-* would have resulted in \**čilta-* in Mongolian. Kirg. *šilta-* “to find a pretext”, *šiltō* “excuse, pretext” and Alt. *šiltak* “reason, cause” are apparently loanwords borrowed from Mongolian. So are Yak. *siltā-* “to find an excuse or pretext”, *siltān* “because of, on account of” and Tuv. *čildak* “cause, reason”, *čildagān* id. (The Tuvinian forms in /č/, however, go back to unattested Mo. forms with initial /č/, not to those with initial /s/).

The alternation *t- ~ s-* is also observed in the following examples: CT *ton* “garment, clothing”, Az., Osm. *don* id., Trkm. *dōn* “outer garment, overcoat” ~ Yak. *son* id.; CT *tīn-* “to be at ease, come to rest”, Trkm. *dīn-* id., Yak. *tīn-* “to breathe”, Trkm. *dīnč* “rest, repose”, Kirg. *tīnčī-* “to rest, get ease” Yak. *sīnān-* id. < \**sinč-a-n-*; CT *toŋ* “frost”, *toŋ-* “to be frozen”, Trkm. *doŋ-* id., Yak. *toŋ-* id. ~ Chuv. *šān-* id. < \**sīon-* < \**sōŋ-*, *šān* “frost” (Chuv. *tām* id. < Trk.) ~ Mo. *sōng* “small pieces of ice in a river; ice floes”, etc.

It is very remarkable that the alternation *t- ~ s-* is still in effect in the Turkic languages. In some Bashkir dialects, for example, the initial *t-* of certain words is pronounced *s*, e. g. Ay dial. *sīrā* “surroundings”

(lit. *tirä*), *sirälä-* “to surround” (lit. *tirälä-*), *sir-* “to gather, pick (of fruits)” (lit. *tir-*)<sup>3</sup>, *söyđä* “the back side of an axe” (~ lit. *töyđä*)<sup>4</sup>, etc.

These examples would suffice to prove that there was an alternation *t- ~ s-* in pre-Turkic as well as in proto-Altaiic. The phonetic explanation of this alternation is simple: a strongly aspirated initial *t-* may develop easily first into an interdental  $\theta$ , then to a dental fricative.

The Common Mongolian word for “tooth” or “teeth” is, as known, *šidü(n)*: Mo. *sidü(n)*, SH *šidu*, *sudu*, Muk. *šidün*, Kh. *šüd(en)*, Bur. *šudeŋ*, Klm. *šüdŋ*, Mog. *südün*, Urd. *šudu*, Dag. *šide*, Mngr. *šdi*<sup>5</sup>. The second syllable of Mo. *šidü(n)* is in all probability identical with the suffix *-dü(n)* of Mo. *ömüdü(n)* “trousers, underpants”. The latter is cognate with CT *üm* (< *\*üm*) “trousers, drawers” (cf. Uig., MK *üm* id., Ho., Osm. *im* id., AH *išim* “drawers” < *ič im*, Kirg. *šim*, Kzk. *šim* id. < *išim*, Yel. Uig. *yem* “pants, trousers”, Chuv. *yëm* “linen trousers” < *\*üm*). CT *üm* clearly shows that the syllable *-dü(n)* in Mo. *ömüdü(n)* is a suffix of duality. This suffix is found also in Middle Turkic *yamdu* “groins”: MK, IM, AH *yamdu* “groins” < *yam-du*. The dual form in *-z* of this word is more common in Turkic: Uig. *yamuz*, *yomuz* “groins”, MK *yamiz* id., Nog. *yamiz*, Tob. *yamuz*, *yambuz*, Krč. *jamiz*, Blk. *zammiz* id. < *yam-i-z*. The singular form of Turkic *yamdu* and *yamiz* is found in Mo. *čami*, *čabi*, *sami* “groins” (Kh. *tsav’* id.)<sup>6</sup>.

Thus, it may safely be assumed that the simplex of Mo. *šidü(n)* “teeth” was something like *\*sil*, i. e., a form identical with proto-Chuvash or proto-Bulgarian *\*sīl*.

The final *-l* of this proto-Mongolian form can be seen in Mo. *šilüge* “three-year-old sheep”, SH *šilegu* “two-year-old animal”, *šilegu honin* “two-year-old sheep”<sup>7</sup>. Mo. *šilüge/šilegü* (Kh. *šülge*) is obviously related to Mo. *šidü(n)* and its original meaning must have been “an animal with teeth, a teething animal”. As it is generally known, nomads look

<sup>3</sup> See N. Kh. MAKŠUTOVA, *Vostočnyj dialekt baškirskogo jazyka*, Moskva 1976, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> *Baškirsko-russkij slovar’*, Moskva 1958, p. 479.

<sup>5</sup> Nicholas POPPE, *Introduction to Mongolian Comparative Studies* (= *MSFOu* 110), Helsinki 1955, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> Ferdinand de LESSING, *Mongolian-English Dictionary*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1960.

<sup>7</sup> Erich HAENISCH, *Wörterbuch zu Manğol un Niuca Tobca’an*, Leipzig 1939.

at the teeth of an animal in order to determine its age and to name it accordingly. Mo. *šidüleng* “three-year-old horse or ox, two-year-old sheep”, which is derived from *šidüle-* “to teethe”, testifies to this assumption.

The loss of final *-l* in proto-Mo. *sil* in Mo. *šidü(n)* is regular. As is known, the final *-l* in Mongolian is generally dropped before /d/ (also before /r/, /n/ and the suffix *-sun/-sün*): *kötöl* “lead horse” + *-d* > *kötöd* “lead horses”, *tüšimel* “official” + *-d* > *tüšimed* “officials”, etc.<sup>8</sup>. Consequently, we may assume that Mo. *šidü(n)* goes back to an earlier *\*sil + dü(n)*.

Before concluding this paper, I also would like to deal with Mo. *šilüge*, *šilegü* and its Turkic counterpart *šišäk* “two-year-old sheep”. It is generally believed that Trk. *šišäk* is a derivative of *šiš-* “to swell” (cf. DOERFER, *TEMN* III, 328; RÄSÄNEN, *VETW*, 424). This is of course wrong. Trk. *šišäk* does not have anything to do with *šiš-* or “swelling”. As CLAUSON rightly states, *šišäk* is a derivative of Trk. *tišä-* “to lose the milk-teeth, to teethe”. As I have already mentioned, nomads name animals by examining their teeth (cf. Kirg. *eki tištü koy* “two-year-old sheep”, *tört tištü koy* “four-year-old sheep”, etc.). Besides, there is also phonetic evidence for the origin of Trk. *šišäk*. The word occurs as *tišäk* in MK. DOERFER thinks that MK *tišäk* is secondary and has come into being as a result of dissimilation (*TEMN* III, 328). I do not agree with him for the following reasons: 1) Examples of dissimilation are extremely rare (actually nonexistent) at this stage of development; 2) apart from *tišäk* in MK, we have Yak. *tisäŋä/tihäŋä* “three-year-old calf or colt” and Yel. Uig. *tisemei* “three-year-old sheep”. Yakut and Yellow Uigur examples are undoubtedly derivatives of Trk. *\*tišä-* “to lose the milk-teeth” (Yak. *tisä-*, *tihä-* id.). CT *šišäk*, on the other hand, goes back to an earlier *sišäk*. The latter occurs in IM. AH, Hou., Osm. and Chag. *šišäk* have obviously come into being as a result of assimilation: *sišäk* > *šišäk*. Some modern Turkic forms, e. g., Trkm. *išek*, NUig. *iššäk*, Kklp. *isek* and Kzk. *sek* also go back to a form with initial /s/, i. e., *sišäk*. The loss of initial /s/ before /i/ and /ü/ is well-known in the Turkic languages: CT *šiš-* “to swell” (< *\*siš-*), Az., Osm., etc. *šiš-*, Trkm. *čiš-*, Nog. *sis-*, Kirg. *šiši-*, Khak. *sis-*, Alt. *tiš-* (dissimilation), but Kzk. *is-*,

<sup>8</sup> See John STREET, *The Language of the Secret History of the Mongols*, New Haven 1957, p. 10.

NUig. *išši-*, Tuv. *iš-*; CT *šiš* “skewer” (< \**šiš*), Kirg., etc. *šiš*, but Kzk. *iš*; CT *süz-* “butt”, MK, etc. *süs-*, but NUig. *üs-*, Tuv. *üz-*, etc. In the presence of this evidence, it may be assumed that *tīšäk* and *sīšäk* occurred as two alternate forms in proto-Turkic; but *tīšäk* was the original form.

Chuvash equivalent of Turkic *tīšäk/sīšäk* is regularly *šäla*, which means, however, not “two-year-old sheep”, but “pike perch” Chuv. *šäla* goes back to an earlier \**siläg*. The latter must have been borrowed into Hungarian at an early date (cf. Hung. *süllő* “pike perch”)⁹. The gemination of /l/ in Hung. *süllő* (pronounced *šüllő*) must be due to the length of either the vowel of the first syllable or that of the second. The semantic shift from “animal with teeth” to “fish with teeth”, and finally to “pike perch” is quite normal and regular, as pointed out also by RÓNA-TAS¹⁰. Apart from Yak. *tīsāṅä/tīhāṅä* given above, Tuv. *dižer* “large toothed” (e. g., *d. a’t* “old horse”), Kzk. *tiser* “sharp-toothed”, NUig. *čišar* “sharp-toothed, large toothed” (< \**tīšāṅ*) also testify to the assumption that the original meaning of Turkic *tīšäk/sīšäk* and Chuvash *šäla* (< \**siläg* > Hung. *šüllő*) is “animal with teeth”.

To sum up:

1. Chuvash *šäl* and Turkic *tīš* are cognates;
2. Common Turkic *šišäk* is not a derivative of *šiš-* “to swell”, but it goes back to an earlier *tīšäk* which is derived from \**tīšä-* “to teethe (after shedding the milk-teeth)”;
3. Turkic *tīšäk/sīšäk*, Mongolian *šilüge/šilegü* and Chuvash *šäla* are cognates;
4. finally, Turkic *tīš* and Mongolian *šidü(n)* are cognates and therefore they can safely be included among the other Turko-Mongolian cognates supporting the Altaic theory.

⁹ Louis LIGETI, “Quelques problèmes étymologiques des anciens mots d’emprunt turcs de la langue hongroise,” *AOH*, XXIX (1975), p. 286.

¹⁰ RÓNA-TAS, “On the Chuvash guttural stops in the final position,” in *Studia Turcica*, ed. by L. LIGETI, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest 1971, p. 398. RÓNA-TAS maintains that because of its initial *s-* Mo. *silegü* is an Old Chuvash-Bulgarian loan word in Mongolian. The examples of the alternation *t- ~ s-* given in this paper would suffice to refute this view.