TRACTATA ALTAICA

DENIS SINOR

sexagenario
optime de rebus altaicis merito
dedicata

OTTO HARRASSOWITZ · WIESBADEN

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redigerunt

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Contents

Pentti Aalto
The "Elementa Linguae Tartaricae" by Ferdinand Verbiest, S. J. . . . 1

Françoise Aubin
Cadenas et clef - note d'ethno-linguistique mongole 11

Robert Austerlitz
L'appellation du renne en japonais, ainou et surtout en ghiliak 45

N. A. Baskakov
Über die Herkunft des Ethnonyms "baškir" 51

Charles R. Bawden
On the Evils of Strong Drink: A Mongol Tract from the Early 20th Century 59

Lajos Bese
Some Investigations on the History of the Verbal Inflection in Mongolian 81

A. J. E. Bodrogligeti
The Authorship and Sources of the Muʿīnu' l-Murīd 87

John Andrew Boyle
Alexander and the Turcs 107

Gyula Décsy
Ein k. und k.-Phänomen 119

Linda Dégh
Two Letters from Home 125

Vladimir Drimba
Devinettes tatares de Dobroudja 147

Joseph Fletcher
Confrontations between Muslim Missionaries and Nomad Unbelievers in the Late Sixteenth Century 167

Herbert Franke
Two Chinese-Khitan Macaronic Poems 175

Walter Fuchs
Jušen-manǰurische Wortgleichungen 181

István Futaky, Peer Buchholz, Hans G. Hoyer
Zur Geschichte des Tabaks in Westsibirien 189

Annemarie von Gabain
Ein chinesisch-uigurischer Blockdruck 2o3

Eric P. Hamp
Palatalization and Harmony in Gagauz and Karaite 211

Gombojab Hangin
Na. Sayinčoγtu's (Sayičungγa) Works:
The Period of Nationalistic Realism 215

Arthur T. Hatto
The Catalogue of Heroes and Heroines in the Kirgiz "Joloi-Kan" 237

Shirô Hattori
Some Problems on the Reconstruction of the Mongolian Sounds
of the Secret History of the Mongols: On the Word Gu-un 261

Georg Hazai
Ein uigurisches Kolophon zu einem Avalokiteśvara-Lobpreis 273

Walther Heissig
Die Čaγadai-"Bilig" und ihre Historizität 277

Erkki Itkonen
Etymologische Beiträge 291

Sechin Jagchid
The Manchu Ch'ing Policy towards Mongolian Religion 3o1

Aulis J. Joki
Some Samoyed-Tunguz Word Comparisons 321

Zsuzsa Kakuk
Zur Frage des tschuwaschischen -n und -m 325

Béla Kálmán
Aus der Geschichte des Futurs im Ungarischen 337

György Kara
Writing, Symbols and Ornaments on Two Mongolian Scrolls 345

John R. Krueger
A Decree on the Origins of Lamaism Among the Kalmyks (1756) 355

László Lőrincz
Die Heldenepik der Altai-Türken - inhaltlich-typologische Analyse . . . 365

Julius Mägiste
Zum eventuellen Dual im Ostseefinnischen 381

Iben Raphael Meyer
Zur Geschichte des vierfachen Wechsels im Türkischen 385

Roy Andrew Miller
Old Japanese Sirö "Fortress, Citadel" 397

N. Ts. Münküyev
A Mongolian Hunting Practice of the 13th Century and the
Buryat Terms zeegete aba and aba khaidag 417

Shichiro Murayama
Ramstedt und Polivanov als Altaist-Japanologen 435

Felix J. Oinas
The Tragedy of Kalevipoeg and of the South Slavic Heroes 447

Nicholas Poppe
Ancient Mongolian 463

Omeljan Pritsak
The Hsiung-nu Word for "Stone" 479

Igor de Rachewiltz

Some Remarks on the Stele of Yisüngge 487

Paul Ratchnevsky

La condition de la femme mongole au $12^{e}/13^{e}$ siècle 5o9

Alo Raun

The expression of 'Best' in the (Balto-) Finnic Languages 531

András Róna-Tas

On the Meaning of "Altaic" 549

Jean-Paul Roux

A propos des osselets de Gengis Khan 557

Maria Salga

On Initial Images in Mongolian Folk-Poetry 569

Alice Sarkőzi

A Mongolian Manual of Divination by Means of Characteristics of the Land 583

Edmond Schütz

Bolgaro-Turkic Term -- Hungarian Horsemanship 6o5

Bertold Spuler

Le christianisme chez les mongols aux $XIII^{e}$ et XIV^{e} siècles 621

E. Tenišev

Mongolische Entlehnungen in der Sprache der "Šir-a Uighuren" 633

Kaare Thomsen

Über einige Vokalphoneme im Mongolischen 641

Edward Tryjarski

An Armeno-Kipchak Sermon by Anton Vertabed from the 17^{th} Century 647

Steven Bela Vardy

The Birth of the Hungarian "Kulturgeschichte" School A Study of History of Hungarian Historical Studies 675

Andrew Vászonyi

The Star-Boarder - Traces of Cicisbeism in an Immigrant Community 695

Wolfgang Veenker

Zum Typ CVC der ersten Silbe im Vogulischen 715

Vilmos Voigt

Formation of Metric Systems on the Balkans 733

Hartmut Walravens

Übersicht über chinesische Steinabklatsche mit mandjurischen Inschriften in amerikanischen Sammlungen 743

Michael Weiers

Ein Schreiben südostmongolischer Stammesfürsten an den Mandschuherrscher Sure Han aus dem Jahre 1636 755

Peter Zieme

Singqu Säli Tutung — Übersetzer buddhistischer Schriften ins Uigurische 767

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Herbert Franke (München)

TWO CHINESE-KHITAN MACARONIC POEMS

After the treaty of Shan-yüan (1004) normal and regular diplomatic relations providing for annual embassies were established between the Chinese Sung empire and the Khitan empire of Liao. In the course of these mutual embassies many Chinese envoys learned the Khitan language. Some of these Chinese were famous scholars and even made use of Khitan words in their productions. Two of these mixed Chinese-Khitan ("makkaronic") poems have survived. The Khitan words occurring in Chinese phonetic rendering in the poems have been explained by glosses so that these words can be used for the study of the Khitan language. The poems have been studied previously by Japanese scholars, first by Shiratori Kurakichi in Shigaku Zasshi 23 (1912): 1249-1252, and recently by Otagi Matsuo in Shukan Toyogaku 6 (1961): 103-119. Not all the problems posed by the Khitan words have, however, been solved, nor can the present author propose valid solutions. The ultimate word will have to rest with scholars in the Altaic field.

I. The poem by Yü Ching.

Yü Ching (1000-1064), a statesman and scholar of the Northern Sung served as Chinese ambassador to the Khitan in 1043, 1044 and 1045. His Chinese-Khitan makkaronic poem seems to have been recorded first in a work on poetics, the Chung-shan shih-hua by Liu Pin (1022-1088), also known under the title Kung-fu shih-hua (ed., Pai-ch'uan hsüeh-hai, p. 11a, ed., Li-tai shih-hua, p. 16a of the 1770 print). From there it has been copied into the Shih-shih [History of Poems] by Ts'ai Chü-hou, a work compiled ca. 1120, of which only fragments have survived through quotations. The Shih-shih in turn has been excerpted into the work Tseng-hsiu Shih-hua tsung-kuei, another work on poetics by the Sung author Juan Yüeh (ca. 1123). Our poem appears there in the section po-shih ("universal knowledge"), ed., Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an (facsimile of a 1544 print), ch. 2, 6a. It is also quoted in ch. 24 of the Ch'i-tan kuo-chih, a work of uncertain date (13th century?) and authorship (ed., Sao-yeh shan-fang [1798] 24, 3a; ed., Commercial Press, Wan-yu wen-k'u, ch. 24, p. 173). Ming and Ch'ing works also occasionally contain the

poem: Lang-yeh tai-tsui pien, ch. 35, by Chang Ting-ssu (1543-1603); Kai-yü ts'ung-k'ao by Chao I (1727-1814, preface dated 1790, ed., Commercial Press [1957] ch. 24, p. 477); Liao-shih shih-i by Li E (1692-1752, preface dated 1743; ed., Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng, ch. 24, p. 433). The text of the poem and the covering story vary slightly in these different works.

The oldest text, that of Liu Pin's Shih-hua, reads as follows:

> Yü Ching was twice an ambassador to the Khitans, and the feelings of the caitiffs towards him became increasingly friendly. He understood the barbarian language and made a poem with barbarian words. The ruler of the caitiffs said: "If you are able to recite it I shall toast you with a drink." Yü Ching raised [his cup] and said:
>
> The nocturnal banquet is she-lo 設羅 [v.l. she-pa 設罷 ; Gloss: "plentiful"].
> Your servant pai-hsi 拜洗 [Gloss: "receives favors"].
> Our two courts are chüeh-ho 厥荷 [Gloss: "in good relations"].
> and the feelings are kan-le 幹勒 [v.l. wo-le 斡勒 , kan-chin 幹勤 ; Gloss: "liberal"].
> The lesser servants ya-lu 雅魯 [v.l. chih-lu 稚魯 Gloss: "bow and dance"].
> They pray for jo-t'ung 若統 [v.l. k'u-t'ung 苦統 ; Gloss: "blessing"].
> Your holy long life may be t'ieh-pai 鐵擺 [Gloss: "mountain-high, majestic"]
> and altogether k'o-t'e 可忒 [Gloss: "without limit"].
>
> The ruler laughed heartily and emptied his goblet for him.
> In the History of Han there are the poems of the P'an-mu and Pai-lang [tribes] which are a translation from the barbarian language. This is not at all like [Yü] Ching who used genuine barbarian words!

The poems of the Southwestern aborigines which are mentioned in the story are in Hou-Han-shu (Po.na. ed.) ch. 116 (lieh-chuan 76), 32b-33a.

As to the Khitan words in Yü Ching's poem both Shiratori and Otagi have proposed reconstructions which seem doubtful. The problem is also complicated by the variant readings of the Khitan words in the texts.

1. she-lo/she-pa "plentiful". Otagi equates this with Mongol seri- or siged-, with the past tense suffix -ba. It is impossible to determine whether she-lo or she-pa is the correct reading of the word. The Old Mandarin sound of the Chinese syllables (Ancient Chinese seems to be out of the question for the 11th century) must have been something like *sialo/siaro or *siaba. Maybe the word is connected with Khitan she 捨 which meant "good", cf. Shiratori, op.cit., p. 1263.

2. pai-hsi "receives favors". Shiratori connects this with Manchu baili "favor", Otagi with Mongol bari- "to take". The O.M. sound was *baisi.

3. chüeh-ho "good relations". Otagi connects this with a Mongol word cihu ("intimité"). This reconstruction, apart from the fact that the Mongol root seems to be a ghost-word, is certainly wrong because the Chinese syllable chüeh had, in the 11th century, a k- initial, so that the Khitan word must have been something like *küeho.

4. kan-le/wo-le/kan-chin "liberal, generous". Here again the variant readings make all efforts at reconstruction gratuitous. Shiratori derives the word from Mongol gün "deep", Otagi from Mongol ülegü "surplus".

5. ya-lu/chih-lu "bow and dance". Otagi suggests Mongol jiryayu "to rejoice". The O.M. readings, however, rather point to either *yaru, *yalu or *jiru.

6. jo-t'ung/k'u-t'ung "blessing". Shiratori reads k'u-t'ung and connects this with Turkic/Mongol qutuq "blessing". Otagi reconstructs an enigmatic Mongol "jol-tügehün" [sic]. The O.M. sounds would be something like *niotung or *kutung.

7. t'ieh-pai "mountain-high, majestic". Shiratori hesitates between Manchu cob (as in cob seme) and Turkic tepe "mountain". Otagi reconstructs Mongol jigiige bui "is extended", which has no relation with the approximate ancient sound value *tebai.

8. k'o-t'e "without limit". Otagi reconstructs "kunde-ye" which he derives from Mongol gün "deep". The old sounds were something like *kate or *kote.

This brief survey shows that the poem of Yü Ching is quite clear as to the meaning, thanks to the Chinese gloss, but that the sounds and meanings of the Khitan words have to be left unexplained.

II. The poem by Tiao Yüeh.

Tiao Yüeh who lived ca. 1000-1082 or 1083 and obtained his chin-shih degree in 1030, was a scholar-official of the Sung. He was a member of the embassy sent to the Khitan in 1049. His makkaronic poem has been preserved in many texts. The oldest and most reliable source seems to be the Meng-ch'i pi-t'an by the famous Sung scholar and scientist Shen Kua (1029-1093), ed., Hu Tao-ching, Shanghai 1956, ch. 25, p. 806. The poem occurs also in Juan Yüeh's Shih-hua tsung-kuei, ch. 18, 1b (in the section chi-shih men "relation of events"), in Tseng Ts'ao's (12th century) Lei-shuo (ed., Peking, 1955) vol. 5, ch. 56, 11b-12a, in the Hsü Mo-k'o hui-hsi by P'eng Ch'eng (ed., Ku-chin shuo-hai) ch. 8, 3b, in Chou Mi's (1232-1298) Ch'i-tung yeh-yü (ed., Shuo-k'u) ch. 16, 6a, in the Ch'i-tan kuo-chih, ch. 24, p. 173 (Wan-yu wen-k'u ed.), in ch. 3 of the Lang-yeh tai-tsui pien and in Ch'ing texts such as the Liao-shih shih-i and the Kai-yü ts'ung-k'ao.

The translation of the poem follows the critical text of Hu Tao-ching's edition of the Meng-ch'i pi-t'an.

Ruling over the feast is the i-li-pi 移離畢 [Gloss: "Name of an official, like the Prime Minister in China"].

Looking after the room is the ho-pa-chih 賀跋支 [Gloss: in charge of the clothing-room door"].

The departing presents are three p'i-lieh 匹裂 [Gloss: "a small wooden bowl made of se-ling wood; it is like yellow lacquer"].

As a friendly present are given ten p'i-li 貔貍 [Gloss: "The p'i-li has the shape of a rat but it is bigger. It lives in holes and eats grain; it is fond of meat. The barbarians regard it as a delicacy. The taste is like that of a suckling-pig and very delicate"].

1. i-li-pi is a well attested word. It was a Khitan title. K. H. Menges in his article "Titles and organizational terms of the Qytan (Liao) and the Qara-Qitaj (Si-Liao)" in Rocznik Orientalisticzny (1951-52), 72-73 derives this word from the Turkic words el (il) and beg "the beg [lord, official] of an el (il) 'tribe, people'." On the word beg (bäg) see also the detailed discussion in Gerhard Doerfer, Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen, vol. II (Wiesbaden 1965) p. 389-406. Another reconstruction of the Khitan term would be *ilbi(g) "the lord (big, beg) of the East - or Front - (Old Turkic il)". The derivation from el "tribal group" seems, however, preferable.

El-begi is indeed attested in Old Turkish (Drevnetjurkskii slovar', p. 169). Otagi is, of course, mistaken in explaining the word i-li-pi as the past tense ilegebi of the Mongol verb ilege- "to send". It is well known that there was a strong Uighur cultural influence in the Liao empire of the Khitan and that we must reckon with the occurrence of titles derived from Old Turkish.

2. ho-pa-chih "in charge of the clothing-room door". Both Shiratori and Otagi try to establish a connection of this word with Mongol qubčasun "clothes". In my opinion another reconstruction could be a word related to Turkic qapaγči "door-keeper".

3. p'i-lieh "wooden bowl". Shiratori relates this to Tungus (Goldi) pele "bowl", Otagi adduces Mongol pila "bowl, dish". But this word is certainly a loan from Manchu fila, id. There can hardly be any doubt that this Khitan word *pile is of Tungus origin.

4. p'i-li "name of an animal". The animal in question is, according to the description, the steppe-marmot (Mongol tarbaγa). On the steppe-marmot see also Francis W. Cleaves in Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 19 (1956): 263-265, where the Mongol name of the animal is discussed in detail. Otagi, if I understand him correctly, reconstructs belen which he seems to relate with Mongol beleg "gift, present". But the Chinese text makes it quite clear that p'i-li is the name of the animal. A Sung text, the Hua-man lu by Chang Shun-min (ca. 1034-1110) (ed., Pai-hai, ch. 1, 24a) gives p'i-li-pang 毗黎邦 as the name of the animal.

In closing a few general remarks can be made. It is evident that Otagi's reconstructions are all based on comparisons with Mongol. It is, however, by no means certain that the Khitan language was "une langue Mongole fortement palatalisée" as Pelliot had once said (Journal Asiatique, 1920, p. 145), an opinion repeated also by L. Ligeti (AOH, 1959, p. 248). Recently P. Ratchnevsky has cast some doubt on this theory (Mélanges de Sinologie offerts à M. Paul Demiéville, Paris 1966, p. 246). It is certain, in any case, that the two Khitan-Chinese poems cannot throw more light on the linguistic affinities of the Khitan. The renderings of Khitan words in Chinese orthography pose two general problems. First, the possibility of simple misprints or clerical errors has to be taken into account. The variant readings in the two poems show this quite clearly. But also the Chinese glosses are not always reliable or unambiguous. This applies not only to the poems discussed above but also to the Chinese meanings given for Khitan words

in the Liao-shih and other contemporary sources. We have therefore to reckon with these two uncertitudes in most cases. The study of Khitan words in Chinese orthography will have to be taken up again in greater depth. It is surprising that one methodological approach has not yet been seriously tried out, namely, an analysis of the phonetic structure of the Khitan personal names. Instead of trying to suggest at random possible etymologies it would be more useful to discover Khitan sound-patterns even if they are hidden under Chinese orthography. These sound-patterns should then be compared with what we know of the patterns of known languages, either Tungus or Mongol. Finally, it must not be forgotten that in a federation like that of the Khitan we can expect a high degree of language mixture.