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OLD TURKIC *sü* 'ARMY' – ITS FORM, MEANING AND ETYMOLOGY*)

Abstract. The article investigates some aspects of the Old Turkic word *sü*. A sense not recorded in the standard dictionaries is established on the basis of a philological analysis of the available texts. The phonetic shape of *sü* is defended against some claims proposing a different vocalic or consonantal part of it. And finally, a derivation of this word from a Chinese source is questioned as not satisfactorily proved.

La guerre est une chose trop sérieuse pour être confiée à des militaires.
(attributed to Georges Clemenceau, 1841-1929)

The word *sü* 'army, troops' is quite amply attested in Old Turkic, as well as in some later texts, but it seems to have virtually disappeared as an independent lexeme from all Turkic languages before the end of the fifteenth century (Clauson 1972, 781, s.v. *1 sü:*).[1] Therefore the details of its form and meaning must be established solely on the basis of what has been preserved in those texts, which – as always – requires an in-depth and extensive philological study of the available attestations. The opinions regarding the form and the etymology of this word are not uniform among the scholars, nor does its meaning present itself as straightforward as the standard lexicological sources would like to have it.

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1 The word, however, lived on as the element of some compounds, notably in *sü baš-y* 'military leader, army commander' (here sometimes with secondary phonetic changes, resulting in *subašy* vel sim.). A quite recent edition of the "Redhouse dictionary" still contains Turkish *subaşı 2* سوباشی صوباشی Ottoman history '1. police superintendent; 2. farm manager' (not to be confused with *subaşı 1* صوباشی '1. source, spring, fountain; 2. waterside'), and – astonishingly enough – even Turkish *sü 1* سو archaic 'soldier' (Redhouse, 1032, 1037, s.vv.). The construction seen in *subaşı* also proved to be attractive enough to serve as a model for at least one neologism, namely Turkish *subay* 'officer' (cf. *bay* 'rich; prince, chief').

1. The meaning

All the dictionaries and glossaries of Old Turkic commonly used at present, and universally regarded as reliable, gloss the word *sü* with the meaning 'army, troops, military unit(s), soldier(s)'. The original entries are as shown (in the chronological order of their first editions):

1.1. the "Analytical index" by W. Bang and A. v. Gabain (1931, 41 = 499): *sü*, *sụ̈ụ̈* Heer […]

1.2. the "Dictionary of Old Uighur Turkic" by A. Câferoğlu (1993 [1934-1938], 140): *sü* – Ordu, asker […]; (141): *süü* – *sü*. 'ordu, asker' […]

1.3. the dictionary being the fourth volume of the "Old Turkic inscriptions" by H. N. Orkun (1936-1941, IV, 100-101 = 1986, 852-853): *sü* ordu, asker […]

1.4. the glossary in the "Old Turkic grammar" by A. v. Gabain (1974 [1941], 364): *sü*, *süü* (*-ö*?) Heer || ordu

1.5. the glossary in the "Grammar of Orkhon Turkic" by T. Tekin (1968, 370): *sü* army, troops […]

1.6. the "Old Turkic dictionary" (DTS, 1969, 516): *sü* 1. войско […]; 2. военный отряд […]; *sū II* войско […]

1.7. the "Etymological dictionary of pre-thirteenth-century Turkish" by G. Clauson (1972, 781): *I sü:* 'army' […].

There is but one such source which besides 'army' notes also another sense, namely 'march, campaign':

1.8. the glossary in the "Old Turkic written monuments" by S. E. Malov (1951, 423): *sü* войско […]. Войско, поход […].[2]

The existence of the first meaning, i.e. 'army, military unit &c', raises no doubts whatsoever, and it can be supported by many textual examples, for instance:

1.9. "Kül Tegin": ⟨ : U l^1 s^2 Ü g^2 : n̲t̲ A j^1 ^{U}k̲ k^1 I š d^1 m z : ⟩ *ol sü-g an-ta jok kyš-d-ymyz* (E 32 = large inscription 32) 'there we (together) annihilated that army'

1.10. "Bilgä Kagan": ⟨ : I l^2 k^2 I s^2 Ü : t^1 š ^{I}k̲ k^1 m š : r^2 t^2 I : k^2 I n^2 s^2 Ü : b^2 d^2 A : r^2 t^2 I : ⟩ *ilki sü tašyk-myš är-t-i ekin sü äb-dä är-t-i* (E 32 [sic]) 'the first army had set out, the second army was at home'

[2] The second meaning is placed at the very end of this lengthy entry, after the explanation of the compound *sü baš-y* 'military leader' together with its variants (including the Old Russian one), and it is thus very easy to overlook.

1.11. "Toñukuk": ⟨ : U n^1 ^{U}k^1 s^2 Ü s^2 I n^2 : s^2 Ü l^2 t^2 d^2 m ⟩ *on ok sü-si-n sü-lä-t-d-im* (II W 8 = 43) 'I sent out the army of the On Ok on a campaign'

1.12. "Yrk Bitig": ⟨ k^1 n^1 l^1 k^1 : s^2 Ü s^2 I : b^1 k^1 A : Ü n^2 m I s^2 : s^1 g^1 I r^1 : I č r^2 A : l^2 I k^2 : k^2 I j^2 I k^2 : k^2 I r^2 m I s^2 : k^1 n^1 : l^2 g^2 I n^2 : t^1 U t^1 m I s^2 : k^1 r^1 A : k^1 m g^1 : s^2 Ü s^2 I || Ü g^2 I r^2 r^2 : t^2 I r^2 : nč A : b^2 I l^2 I ŋ l^2 r^2 : : d^2 g^2 Ü : U l^1 : ⟩ *kan-lyk sü-si ab-ka ön-miš sagyr ič-rä älik kejik kir-miš kan älig-in tut-myš kara kamag sü-si ögir-är te-r an-ča bil-iŋ-lär ädgü ol* (LXIII / 53v^o-54r^o) 'The khanate army set out for a hunt. Into the battue came a roe deer, a wild animal. The khan grasped [it] with his hand. All his common soldiers rejoice – it says. Thus know ye all: It is good.'

1.13. Maḥmūd al-Kāšġarī "Dīwānu luġāti ăt-Turk": ⟨suw⟩ *sü* = Arabic *ğund* 'soldiers, army', *ğayš* 'army, troops, armed forces', *'askar* 'army, host, troops' (DLT, II, 258/536; III, 170, s.v. *sü*); ⟨'ikky suw⟩ *ekki sü* = Arabic *farīqā ăl-qitāl* 'two battle detachments' (DLT, II, 67/371).

There are, however, attestations in which the word can only stand for 'war, military campaign, battle', as already noticed and pointed out by S. E. Malov (see above, 1.8) – forcing the first meaning in their translation renders them nonsensical:

1.14. "Yrk Bitig": ⟨ k^1 n^1 : s^2 Ü k^2 A : b^1 || r^1 m I s^2 : j^1 g^1 I g^1 : s^1 n^1 nč m I s^2 : k^2 Ü č Ü r^2 Ü : k^1 U n^1 t^1 U r^1 U : k^2 l^2 I r^2 : Ü z I : s^2 Ü s^2 I : Ü g^2 I r^2 A : s^2 b^2 I n^2 Ü : U r^1 d^1 U s^1 I ŋ r^1 U : k^2 l^2 I r^2 : || t^2 I r^2 : nč A : b^2 I l^2 I ŋ l^2 r^2 : : d^2 g^2 Ü : U l^1 : ⟩ *kan sü-kä bar-myš jagy-g sanč-myš köč-ür-ü kon-tur-u käl-ir öz-i sü-si ögir-ä säb-in-ü ordu-sy-ŋaru käl-ir te-r an-ča bil-iŋ-lär ädgü ol* (XXXIV / 30r^o-31r^o) 'The khan went to war.[3] He routed the enemy. He comes [back] settling and resettling [them]. He himself [and] his army come to his royal camp rejoicing and being glad – it says. Thus know ye all: It is good.'

- Orkun 1936-1941, II, 81 = 1986, 273: "sefere varmış"
- Malov 1951, 88: "отправился в военный поход"
- Clauson 1972, 781, s.v. *1 sü:*: "went to the army (i.e. on a campaign)" / 636, s.v. *kontur-*: "went to war"[4]

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[3] Translating 'went to the army' or 'went to an army' here would not make much sense, and for 'went to his army' one would rather expect something of the type ✦*sü-si-ŋärü bar-myš* (cf. later in the same passage: *ordu-sy-ŋaru käl-ir* 'come(s) to his royal camp').

[4] That G. Clauson was conscious of both meanings follows moreover from his rendering of the fragment *sü-dä är-sär sanč-yt-ur*, to be found in the first instalment of the series "Türkische Turfan-Texte" (Bang & Gabain 1929), translated by him as '(if this omen comes to anyone) if he is on a campaign he lets himself be routed' (Clauson 1972, 836, s.v. *sançıt-*). In the "Analytical index" (Bang & Gabain 1931, 41 =

– Tekin 1993, 17: “went on a campaign”

1.15. “Yrk Bitig”: ⟨ l^1 p : r^2 : U g^1 l^1 I : s^2 Ü k^2 A : b^1 r^1 m I s^2 : s^2 Ü : j^2 I r^2 I n^2 t^2 A : r^2 k^2 l^2 I g^2 : ‖ s^1 b^1 č I : t^2 Ü r^2 t^2 m I s^2 : t^2 I r^2 : b^2 I ŋ r^2 Ü : k^2 l^2 s^2 r^2 : Ü z I : A t^1 n^1 m I s^2 : Ü g^2 r^2 nč Ü l^2 Ü g^2 : t^1 I : j^2 I t^2 I g^2 l^2 I g^2 : k^2 l^2 I r^2 : t^2 I r^2 : nč A : b^2 I l^2 I ŋ l^2 ‖ r^2 : ń I g^1 : d^2 g^2 Ü : ⟩ *alp är ogl-y sü-kä bar-myš sü jer-in-tä ärk-lig sab-čy törü-t-miš te-r äb-i-ŋärü käl-sär öz-i at-a-n-myš ögr-ün-čü-lüg at-y jiti-g-lig käl-ir te-r an-ča bil-iŋ-lär ańyg ädgü [ol]* (LV / 47r°-48r°) ‘A brave son of man went to war (to the army?). On the battleground he created powerful messengers (made a powerful messenger?) – it says. When he comes [back] to his home, he comes being himself titled [and] joyful, [and] his horse – being decorated with «sharpings»[5] (?) – it says. Thus know ye all: [It is] extremely good.’

– Orkun 1936-1941, II, 87 = 1986, 279: “orduya varmış”, “ordu yerinde”
– Malov 1951, 90: “отправился в военный поход”, “на поле сражения”
– DTS, 36, s.v. *alp* (*alp er*): “отправился в военный поход”; 478, s.v. *sabčï*: “на поле боя”
– Clauson 1972, 536, s.v. *törüt-*: “went off to the army” / 889, s.v. *yiti:g-lig*: “went to the army”; 536, s.v. *törüt-*: “in the fighting area” / 889, s.v. *yiti:glig*: “on the battlefield” / 954, s.v. *yé:r*: “on the battle-field”
– Tekin 1993, 23: “went to the army (in war)”, “In the field of fight”

1.16. “Or.8212/119 (Ch.00282)”: ⟨yyl’ry yyncwlwk yygr’n ’’δxyr ’’yw | yytmyš twym’n ’wykyrynk’ xwtlwx pwlzwn | ’ltmyš twym’n xwlwnc’x̣ ynk’ ’’lyk | pwlzwn s̱wyc̱y pyr tnkry x’nym swyk’ | ywryts’r ’’yw · yytmyš twym’n s̱ww | c̱ys̱ynk’ xwtlwx pwlzwn ’ltmyš twym’n | twym’n ’’βcysynk’ ’’nklyk pwlzwn⟩ *jyl-lar-y* (*jylar-y*?) *jinčü-lüg jegrän adgyr aj-u jetmiš tümän ögir-i-ŋä kut-lug bol-zun altmyš tümän kulun-čak-y-ŋa alyk bol-zun s̱ü-čị̈ bir täŋri kan-ym sü-kä jory-t-sar aj-u jetmiš tümän s̱ü-čị̈-s̱ị̈-ŋä̱ kut-lug bol-zun altmyš tümän tümän ab-čy-sy-ŋa aŋ-lyk bol-zun* (v° 5-11) ‘Saying: «the chestnut stallions with their manes [*jal*] (halters [*jular*]?)

499, s.v. *sü*) the phrase *sü-dä är-* is also glossed with ‘im Felde stehen’. – But it is exactly here that the *sü* allows of either interpretation for the expression is deprived of any context that would specify its meaning: “Für wen auch immer dieses Zeichen herauskommt, der wird, wenn er im Feld ist, erstochen; wenn er in der Stadt ist, so hat er Verluste” (Bang & Gabain 1929, 9 = 247 / 66-68). ‘On the battleground’ (“im Felde”) seems here as good a translation as ‘in the army’.

[5] It is assumed here that the adjective *jiti-g* ‘sharp’ was used in this passage as a noun to denote perhaps some element of a horse’s trappings symbolising distinction – cf. Polish *ostroga* ‘spur’ (← *ostry* ‘sharp’), and particularly Russian *остроги́* obsolete ‘spur; an adornment for a horse’s hooves resembling a spur (шпора; украшенье у конскихъ копытъ, похожее на шпору)’ (← *о́стрый* ‘sharp’). This word is not to be confused with *et-ig* ‘ornament’ and *et-ig-lig* ‘ornamented, adorned’.

decorated with pearls» – may it be fortunate for their seven hundred thousand herds [*ögür*], may there be saddles (?) for their six hundred thousand little foals. Saying: «if my warrior khan, unique and celestial, orders to march on a campaign» – may it be fortunate for his seven hundred thousand warriors, may there be gamy grounds for his six hundred thousand thousand [sic] hunters.’ (Hamilton 1986, I, 78; II, 291)

– Hamilton 1986, I, 79: “à la guerre”

1.17. Yūsuf Ḫāṣṣ Ḥāǧib “Ḳutaδγu bilig”: *ḳaly at-la(-)n-ur bol-sa bäg-lär sü-kä | ja ḳuš-ḳa čögän-kä ja el kör-gü-kä || iδi saḳ köδäz-gü bu jer-dä bäg-i-n | joδ-uγ täg-mä-sä an-da täŋ-siz-lik-in || ḳaly tuš-sa bäg-lär-kä jaŋl-uḳ ḫaṭa | tuš-ar at üzä ḳuš-ta aβ-da sü-dä* (XXXII, 2581-2583) ‘If the chiefs are to ride for a campaign or for fowling, for a game of polo or for inspecting the realm, in such a place one must guard one’s chief very alertly lest disaster should strike [him] there by some excess. If an error or a mistake happens to the chiefs, it happens while on horseback – at fowling, at hunting, at war.’ (KB I, 271)

– KB II, 191-192: “sefere […] çıktıkları vakit”, “seferde […] gelir”
– DTS, 67, s.v. *atlan-*: “если […] выступят в поход” / 154, s.v. *čögän*: “отправляются ли […] в военный поход”; 68, s.v. *av I*: “происходит […] на войне”
– Ivanov 1983, 209: “Когда […] в бранный бой ли поскачет”, “случаются […] в брани”.

As can be seen, the editions of Old Turkic texts generally accept such renderings, as usually do the dictionaries and glossaries when they quote textual examples. Interestingly enough, in the entry *sü* itself the standard reference works limit themselves infamously to the gloss ‘army’ (cf. 1.1-1.7). The reason for this is quite incomprehensible.

It must be concluded that the Old Turkic word *sü* had two meanings: both ‘1. army, troops’ and ‘2. battle, war, campaign’ as well, and the latter should most certainly be introduced into any future dictionary or glossary.[6] The very fact that those two senses are present in one lexeme is not at all exceptional, or even remarkable, as the following Slavonic instances show:

[6] For the time being it is EASILY available – besides Malov 1951 (see above, 1.8) – in the glossary attached to T. Tekin’s edition of the “Yrk Bitig” (Tekin 1993, 62: “*sü* army; war”) and in the “Grammar of Orkhon Turkic” by the same author (Tekin 2000, 253: “*sü* ordu, askeri birlikler; savaş”), as well as in J. Hamilton’s edition of the Old Uighur manuscripts from Dūnhuáng 敦煌/燉煌 (1986, II, 249: “*sü* […] Armée; campagne militaire, guerre”).

1.18. Russian *полк* ‘regiment; crowd, the multitude’, Serbo-Croatian *pûk* ‘people; common folk, peasantry; crowd, the masses; regiment’, Czech and Slovak *pluk* ‘regiment’ (also Old Polish personal names such as *Pełk*, *Święto-pełk* &c; Modern Polish *pułk* ‘regiment’ ← Russian *полк*; Boryś 2005, 503, s.v. *pułk*) – but: Old Russian *пълкъ* ‘1. army, host, detachment; 2. battle, campaign[7] (1. войско, воинство, отряд; 2. битва, поход)’ < Common Slavonic **pъlkъ*/**pl̨kъ* ‘a large number of people, the multitude, crowd’, related to German *Volk*, English *folk* (Černyx 2001, II, 53, s.v. *полк*)

1.19. Russian *рать* obsolete, poetic ‘1. battle, war; 2. army, host, array’, Bulgarian *pam* obsolete ‘1. war; 2. army’, Serbo-Croatian *rât* ‘war’ < Common Slavonic **ratь*, related to Greek *ἔρις* ‘strife, quarrel, debate, contention, battle; Eris (a goddess who excites to war)’, Old High German *ernust* ‘1. battle, fight; 2. firmness, sincerity (1. Kampf; 2. Festigkeit, Aufrichtigkeit)’ (> Modern German *Ernst*), Old English *eornust*, *-ost* ‘1. ardour in battle; 2. seriousness’ (> Modern English *earnest*) (Černyx 2001, II, 100, s.v. *рать*).

Such examples as those two also clearly demonstrate that although Old Turkic *sü* seems to have originally borne the meaning of ‘army’ on account of its considerably wider distribution, the actual semantic development (or split, rather) can have proceeded in either direction, the shift from ‘army’ to ‘battle’ being overall as possible as the reverse. It goes without saying that this circumstance does not facilitate any further quest for the etymology of the word under consideration, but it must not be disregarded either.

Unfortunately, neither *sü baš-y* ‘military leader, army commander’, *sü-či* ‘warrior’, nor *sü-lä-* ‘to campaign, to wage war; to raid’ contributes to the solution of the problem, as both meanings of Old Turkic *sü* could have formed the basis for them.

2. The form

The Old Turkic word in question is commonly transcribed, and pronounced, *sü* (it is quite impossible to ascertain whether the vowel was short or perhaps long as some notations seem to indicate, cf. 1.1-1.8). It is only A. v. Gabain and G. Doerfer that have proposed somewhat different readings.

The former (Gabain 1974, 364, s.v. *sü*) points out that the vowel might have been low, i.e. *ö* and not *ü* (see above, 1.4), but although this possibility

[7] Cf. *Слово о плъку* (~ *пълку*) *Игоревъ* ‘The Lay (~ Tale) of Igor’s Campaign’.

cannot be excluded, the later development of the phrase *sü baš-y* 'military leader' into *subašy* makes the opposite more probable (cf. above footnote 1; further Clauson 1972, 781, s.v. *1 sü:*). Another attempt by the same author is even more dubious (Gabain 1959, 19-21/206):

2.1. Dies Wort für 'Heer' ist nur wenig verbreitet, nämlich nur in alter Zeit; daher kann man Entlehnung aus dem Chinesischen vermuten. In den Hss. wird es mit *s-* (lies *š-*?) geschrieben und meist mit doppeltem Vav, ohne Yod. In den Inschriften wird es mit *s-* = *š-* und mit *ö* = *ü* geschrieben. Ferner ist es im **Qb** [= KB I] mit *s-* und mit doppeltem Vav belegt. Abgesehen von den beiden Versionen des **Qb** in arabischer Schrift ist also Anlaut mit *š-* möglich; der Vokal oder Diphthong könnte *oo*, *ou*, *uu*, *uo* sein, in den Inschriften aber *ö* = *ü*. **Qb**, ed. R. Arat 2581 hat unter dem Wort *sü+kä* (*sö+*) in der Version B die Notiz *av+γa* 'zur Jagd'! 'Jagd' und 'Feldzug' waren im Grenzland zwischen Bauernland und Steppe von jeher ähnliche Begriffe: Bis zum Ende der Mandschu-Dynastie wurden Manöver, also Kriegsübungen, als umfangreiche Jagdzüge abgehalten. Daher möchte ich unser Wort zu chin. 狩 *shou* 'Jagd' stellen, < *śi̯ə̯u*; wir hätten dann unser Wort als *šou* oder *šöü* zu lesen, das in den Inschriften zu *šō̄*, in den Versionen des **Qb** in arabischer Schrift > *sō̄* geworden wäre.

The idea that the word had an initial *š-* was rightly rejected already by G. Clauson (1972, 781, s.v. *1 sü:*) on philological grounds: "The theory […] is quite untenable since the spelling with *s-* is universal in texts in Ar. script" (cf. e.g. 1.13 above). It is also worth adding that those runic texts which differentiate between *s* and *š* never have ⟨š⟩ in this word either (cf. e.g. 1.9-1.10 above). And the vocalic part of *sü* remains as obscure as before. (A. v. Gabain's etymology will be discussed later on.)

On the other hand, the following view was expressed by G. Doerfer (1963-1975, III, 282-283/1279):

2.2. Es ist jedoch vielleicht eher *su* (*śu*) zu lesen, trotz des runenschriftlich bezeugten 𐰚𐰇 (mechanisch transkribiert: *sü*). Dafür spricht:

(1) Das Wort ist fremden (chin.) Ursprungs, s. unten, chin. Aussprache etwa *šeu̯*. Nun gab es im Atü. der Runen noch zwei Konsonantenreihen: eine hintere (*q*, *ł*, *ṣ*, *ṭ* usw.) und eine vordere (*k*, *l*, *ś*, *ť* usw.), s. GABAIN 1950 [= Gabain 1974], 12 (nur der Einfachheit halber schreiben wir nicht *ṣ*, *ś*, sondern stets *s* usw.). Wenn nun ein fremdes Wort mit vorderem Konsonant + hinterem Vokal aufgenommen wurde, entstand eine Schwierigkeit. […] Ebenso [wie bei aus dem Chinesischen entlehntem „*lü*" 'Drache', d.h. eigentlich *lu* ≠ *łu*]

scheint 𐰚𐰞 eben weder **ṣu*, noch tatsächlich **śü* zu sein, sondern **śu*. Überhaupt ist 𐰚 nicht = *ö*/*ü*, wie es gewöhnlich dargestellt wird, sondern bedeutet: „labialer Vokal bei palatalem (vorderem) Konsonanten", ähnlich wie russ. ю nicht = *ü*, sondern = „labialer Vokal bei palatalem Konsonanten". Falls tatsächlich im Atü. *lü* bzw. *śü* zu sprechen wäre, so würde das eine Sonderentwicklung sein, die von der in allen anderen tü. Sprachen abweicht ('Krieg führen' *śulä-* bzw. *śülä-* nicht **ṣuła-*, ist lautharmonisch nach Maßgabe des 1. Konsonanten).

(2) Für die Lesung *su* spricht vielleicht *suu* (سوق) der uig. Schrift, aber s. GABAIN 1950 [= Gabain 1974], 46f.

(3) Dafür sprechen dürfte das im Osm. klar bezeugte *su-bašï* 'Armeekommandant', s. unten (falls keine sekundäre Assimilation vorliegt).

(4) Dafür spricht ferner der Beleg aus der anscheinend einzigen tü. Sprache, die dieses Wort (das sonst wegen seiner Kürze und vielfach auch wegen der Verwechselungsmöglichkeit mit *su* 'Wasser' verlorengegangen ist) bewahrt hat: GELBUIG [= Malov 1957] 105 *su* 'Heer' in *su čerïy* (Binom, zum letzten Glied s. چريك[8]).

(5) Für altes *śu* spricht ferner die Schreibung *šüü*, *šülämäk* in TT I [= Bang & Gabain 1929] (s. Handbuch der Orientalistik, Turkologie [= Gabain 1963], 210).

Die Aussprache *su* dürfte also zumindest diejenige sein, die für einige nicht-atü. Dialekte gilt. Cf. allerdings andererseits K 547 [= DLT, II, 258/536?] *süge* (*sügä*) Dativ von *sü*, das klar beweist, daß sich *śu* hier schon > *sü* entwickelt hat. Wir müssen also eine Dialektspaltung des unlautharmonischen *śu* zu *su* bzw. *sü* annehmen.

The whole explanation is highly teleological, especially in its first very speculative argument: it is not the form (or the meaning) here that would incline one to seek a foreign etymology for the word, but rather the other way around – it is the assumption of a foreign etymology that leads G. Doerfer to all this verbal acrobatics. To put it another way, either the rune ⟨Ü⟩ 𐰚 stands for *u* after a palatalised consonant, which means that the entire phonological system of Old Turkic needs reinterpretation – but in that case there would be nothing unusual in reading ⟨ s^2 Ü ⟩ 𐰚𐰞 as *śu* (the same would have to be done with all words, including native ones, of course); or the said lexeme was pronounced *śu* and this was something extraordinary against a background of the Old Turkic phonology – but then again, one would expect some unusual spelling to confirm that, e.g. *⟨ s^2 U ⟩ 𐰴𐰞* vel sim. Nothing of the kind is actually found in Old

[8] This reference is to another entry in G. Doerfer's own book, not to S. E. Malov's dictionary.

Turkic texts. All the derived forms, ⟨ s^2 Ü g^2 ⟩ *sü-g*, ⟨ s^2 Ü k^2 A ⟩ *sü-kä*, ⟨ s^2 Ü s^2 I ⟩ *sü-si*, ⟨ s^2 Ü s^2 I n^2 ⟩ *sü-si-n*, ⟨ s^2 Ü l^2 t^2 d^2 m ⟩ *sü-lä-t-d-im* &c, only confirm the front vocalism of the base noun.[9]

As for G. Doerfer's points 2 and 3, he actually refutes his own arguments by himself: the Uighur script does allow of the defective spelling of *ü* (cf. the *sụụ* in 1.1 above),[10] and the later forms of the type *subašy* can easily be accounted for by pointing either to an assimilation to *su* 'water' (cf. Clauson 1972, 781, s.v. *1 sü:*) or to a harmonic levelling in which the ever-vital *baš* 'head' would have played the dominant role[11] (or even both, for that matter). Number 5, in turn, is a trap set by A. v. Gabain, who does indeed use the forms *šọü* and *šülä-* in her article on the pre-Islamic Turkic literature (Gabain 1963, 210), but this is probably to be attributed to her preoccupation with the Chinese etymology (see above, 2.1), as in the original edition – to which she herself refers – the forms are transcribed *sụụ* and *sülä-*, respectively (Bang & Gabain 1929, 8 = 246 / 31-32).

Finally, the fourth argument is absolutely spurious, as the inspection of the source on which G. Doerfer relies proves. The relevant entry of this dictionary reads in full (Malov 1957, 105, s.v. *cy*):

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[9] The very idea that the runic script reflects a picture quite different from the modern Turkic languages, namely that it was the consonants that were diversified into palatal and non-palatal phonemes (*ḱ*, *ĺ*, *ś*, *ť* &c as opposed to *ḳ*, *ḷ*, *ṣ*, *ṭ* &c), and not the vowels, can easily be invalidated by adducing the following facts: **1.** what Old Turkic had was certainly not two series of consonants ("zwei Konsonantenreihen") but two series of characters in the runic script, for it is absolutely impossible to imagine any opposition of "palatal" and "non-palatal" *j*, which would be necessary in view of the existence of ⟨j^1⟩ 𐰃 and ⟨j^2⟩ 𐰆 (a similar problem concerns ⟨ń⟩ 𐰋 and ⟨n^2⟩ 𐰍, the latter existing beside ⟨n^1⟩ 𐰊); **2.** the diversification of consonantal characters does not cover all Old Turkic phonemes and it is phonetically very inconsistent (cf. for instance ⟨b^1⟩ 𐰉 versus ⟨b^2⟩ 𐰚 as against ⟨p⟩ 𐰇 or ⟨m⟩ 𐰢 without distinction); **3.** G. Doerfer's "Maßgabe des 1. Konsonanten" would mean that Old Turkic possessed a consonantal harmony, and not – as commonly accepted – a vocalic one.

It can thus be concluded that the Old Turkic runes stood either for a consonant or for a consonant with a preceding vowel (not a following one, as confirmed by the fact that word-final vowels were always written explicitly); the differentiation between ⟨C^1⟩ and ⟨C^2⟩ must refer to the quality of the vowels, unless one would like to assume some kind of "Sonderentwicklung" in the Old Turkic phonological system that would violate the basic rules of phonetics ("non-palatal *j*"!).

[10] A convincing explanation of such an orthography has been furnished by J. Hamilton (1986, I, 80-81/14.9): "la notation WW au lieu de WY devait servir, dans le cas d'un monosyllabe se terminant en *-ö* ou *-ü*, à le distinguer facilement, à plus forte raison lorsque ce dernier est sans suffixe, de monosyllabes se terminant par une diphtongue notée WY = *-oy*/*-uy*/*-öy*/*-üy*".

[11] Cf. Modern Turkish *bugün* 'today' (< *bu* 'this' + *gün* 'day'), also pronounced as though it were *bügün*.

2.3. *су* кит. Попов [= П. С. Попов, *Русско-китайский словарь*, Пекин 1896], 473: *су черыг* ‘войско «су»’ (какой-то отряд войска); *чі жу* ‘семь родов (костей)’.

The “*чі жу*” is most certainly a misprint for *чі су*, as also confirmed by other entries: *чі су* ‘семь костей (родов)’ (Malov 1957, 142, s.v. *чі*), *чісу* кит. ‘семь костей – родов (у уйгуров)’ (143, s.v. *чісу*) – and it constitutes a borrowing from Chinese *qīzú* [tɕʰi ʣu] 七族 ‘1. seven generations of a family (*from great-grandfather to great-grandson*); 2. next of kin (*especially, on father’s side*) (1. семь поколений рода (*от прадеда до правнука*); 2. ближайшие (прямые) родственники (*особенно: по отцу*))’. This clearly indicates that the source of the Yellow Uighur *су* ‘a certain military detachment’, although doubtless not identical to *зú* 族,[12] is still to be sought among homophonic Chinese words, and that is probably either Chinese *зú* [ʣu] (< Middle Chinese **tsʰwət*) 倅 obsolete, military ‘sotnia, century (сотня)’ or Chinese *зú* [ʣu] (< Middle Chinese **tswət*) 卒 ‘soldier, warrior; foot soldier (солдат, воин; пеший ратник)’. Thus, the Yellow Uighur word is, to be sure, a Chinese loanword, but for phonetic reasons it must be quite a recent one and as such it cannot be dated back to the Old Turkic period.[13]

All in all, it must be concluded that the most probable form of the word under discussion still remains *sü*. “Now, *here*, you see, it takes all the running *you* can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!” (Lewis Carroll, *Through the looking-glass and what Alice found there*).

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[12] Chinese *зú* (< Middle Chinese **dzəwk*) 族 means ‘1. kin, clan, family; 2. generation; 3. tribe(s), people, nationality; 4. sort, kind, group, category, rank, class, order (1. род, клан, фамилия; 2. поколение; 3. племя, племена, народность, национальность; 4. род, вид, группа, категория, разряд, класс, порядок)’. S. E. Malov’s “кости” (lit. ‘bones’; see 2.3) are to be understood as synonymous with “роды́” (‘families, generations’) in the light of the co-occurrence of both those senses in some Turkic languages, e.g. Yellow Uighur *соңук*, Oirot (Altai) *сӧӧк*, Khakas *сӧӧк*, &c ‘bone; family, generation (кость; род, поколение)’, Kyrgyz *сөөк* ‘bone; relative by marriage (кость; свойственник, родственник по браку)’; cf. Yellow Uighur *джеті сова* ‘семь костей (родов)’ (Malov 1957, 103, s.v. *сова* ‘кость (род)’). Note also Mongolian *jasu(n)* ‘bone, skeleton; race, family, clan, descent’; furthermore, in the following Russian expressions *кость* means something like ‘parentage, descent, lineage’: *дворянская* (~ *белая*) *кость* ‘noble birth, blue blood’, *рабочая кость* ‘working-class background’; *бѣлая и черная кость* ‘noble and common birth (благородное и простое поколѣніе)’.

[13] The same comparison of Old Turkic *sü* and Yellow Uighur *су*, as in *су черыг*, was made by M. Räsänen in his etymological dictionary (1969-1971, [I], 434, s.v. *sü*).

3. The etymology

The first to describe this lexeme as foreign in origin was probably G. J. Ramstedt, who compared Old Turkic *sü* and Sino-Korean *su* in his “Studies in Korean etymology” (Ramstedt 1949-1953, [I], 243, s.v. *sju*):

3.1. sk. *sju* ‘garrison, frontier guards’ in *sju-pi hąda* G [= James Gale, *A Korean-English dictionary*, Yokohama 1911] 584 ‘to garrison, to make preparations for defence’, *sju-pi-tąi* ‘a garrison’;
= ot. uig. *sü* ‘military forces’, ‘army’; osm. *subašy* ‘head of the army, commander’ (< *sü bašy*).

He was followed by G. Doerfer, who introduced the following corrections to the original idea (Doerfer 1963-1975, III, 285/1279):

3.2. Hieran dürfte inkorrekt sein: (1) die Herleitung von osm. *subašï* < *sü bašï*, s. oben; (2) die Herleitung des Wortes aus dem Sk.: im Sk. ist ja *sju* allein nicht belegt, so daß die Grundlage für tü. *sü* fehlt (auch kulturgeschichtlich unwahrscheinlich). Das kor. Wort s. bei USATOV [= Д. М. Усатов et al., *Русско-корейский словарь*, Москва 1954] 136 (garnizón) *subide* (aus dem Chin.), das chin. Wort s. bei Oš [= И. М. Ошанин, *Китайско-русский словарь*, Москва 1955 = KRS] Nr. 3255 守 *ʂou* ‘ochranjáť’, alt: ‘méstnye vlásti, méstnyj garnizón’ (örtliche Streitkräfte, örtliche Garnison). Das atü. Wort *śu* dürfte direkt hieraus entlehnt sein, natürlich aus einer älteren schwer bestimmbaren Aussprache.

The Korean and Chinese material as given by these two authors requires some tidying and ordering here:

3.3. Sino-Korean *su* 수 / 守 bound morpheme ‘to guard, to protect; to observe, to keep; to hold on to, to maintain’ < *syu* 슈 ← Middle Chinese **ɕuw’* > Chinese *shǒu* [ʂo͡ʊ̯] 守 ‘1. to guard, to protect, to defend, to retain, to stand up for; to observe, to keep, to adhere to, to hold to; to guard, to keep watch over, to be on duty, …; 2. guard(sman), watchman, sentry, sentinel (1. охранять, защищать, оборонять, удерживать, отстаивать; блюсти, соблюдать, держаться, придерживаться; караулить, сторожить, дежурить, …; 2. охранник, страж, сторож, караульный)’

3.4. Sino-Korean *supi* [subʲi] 수비 / 守備 ‘garrison, defence, defensive measures’ < *syu* 슈 *pi* 비 ← Middle Chinese **ɕuw’ bi*^{h} > Chinese *shǒubèi* [ʂo͡ʊ̯ ɓe͡i̯] 守備 ‘to guard, to keep watch over; guard, watch (охранять, караулить; охрана, караул)’; Korean *supi hata* [subʲi hada] 수비하다 / 守備

하다 ‘to defend, to guard, to take up garrison duties’ < *syu* 슈 *pi* 비 *hăta* 하다

3.5. Sino-Korean *supitay* [subʲidɛ] 수비대 / 守備隊 ‘a garrison’ < *syu* 슈 *pi* 비 *tăy* 디 ← Middle Chinese **ɕuw' bi^{h} dwəj^{h}* > Chinese *shǒubèiduì* [ʂo͡ʊ ʱe͡i ɖue͡ɪ] 守備隊 ‘guard; garrison (стража; гарнизон)’.

It seems that neither of G. Doerfer’s corrections is actually necessary. The form *sü baš-y* is the only reasonable starting point for any later *subašy* (see above), and thus there is nothing wrong with the statement placed in the “Studies …”. As to the insinuation that G. J. Ramstedt would like to derive any Old Turkic word from Sino-Korean, one is strongly advised to read carefully the very first paragraph of the “Introduction” to the book (for unknown reasons published posthumously in the second volume; Ramstedt 1949-1953, II, 9):

3.6. In my paper «Remarks on the Korean Language» […] I expressed a hope of being able to publish something on the etymology of such Korean words that are not taken from older or later Chinese. I had in view words which are common to Tungusian and Korean and which, to a certain degree, are known also in the Mongolian and Turkic languages. But as all four language groups show a considerable influence of Chinese civilization in their vocabulary, I have included in the following list of words many vocables merely marked «sk.» or Sino-Korean, though it is not, in most cases, certain that Korean pronunciation had made any contribution. In early times the ancestors of the Turks, the Huns, certainly had direct contacts with the Chinese.

Halfway between the publication of G. J. Ramstedt’s etymology and G. Doerfer’s critical support of it, A. v. Gabain came up with a somewhat different idea (see quotation 2.1 above). She also remains faithful to the Chinese language as the source of Old Turkic *sü*, but the lexeme chosen by her is of another meaning (Gabain 1959, 21/206; repeated in the glossary on p. 58, s.v. *šo̯ü*):

3.7. Chinese *shòu* [ʂo͡ʊ] (< Middle Chinese **ɕuw^{h}*) 狩 ‘1. winter riding to hounds; 2. dependent territory, fief, vassals; 3. to hunt (*especially, in winter*); 4. to march, to advance (1. зимняя охота с собаками; 2. подведомственная (ленная) территория, вассалы; 3. охотиться (*особенно: зимой*); 4. идти походом, наступать)’.

Both proposals are phonetically acceptable (the Middle Chinese forms differing but in their tone), yet it is in general dangerously easy to find a Chinese counterpart to virtually any given one-syllable Turkic word. The semantics,

however, fares here considerably worse: G. J. Ramstedt and G. Doerfer’s etymon denotes ‘guard(sman), watchman, sentry, sentinel’, while the Turkic army was surely more an aggressor than a defending party.[14] On the other hand, the derivation offered by A. v. Gabain requires Old Turkic *sü* to have had the original meaning of ‘battle, war, campaign’ – which is not impossible but due to the much wider distribution of the sense ‘army’ one may perhaps be inclined to see the former as secondary. Furthermore, although hunting and campaigning were beyond question connected in the Old Turkic society, as A. v. Gabain notes herself (cf. also Gumilow 1972, 68/VI, as well as the passage *kan-lyk sü-si ab-ka ön-miš* ‘the khanate army set out for a hunt’ in 1.12 above), they were not one and the same thing. Not mentioned by A. v. Gabain is the fourth meaning given above, which would seem most helpful to her idea, namely ‘to march, to advance (идти походом, наступать)’, in T. Morohashi’s dictionary (1994, VII, 7606/20390) defined as: ‘to subjugate, to conquer (うつ。征伐)’ (cf. also *ibidem*: ‘military exercises, manoeuvres (兵を習はすこと)’). Still, the Chinese sense is not identical to the Turkic one, the former ranging from ‘hunting’ through ‘manoeuvres’ to the rare and poorly attested ‘march’ or ‘subjugation, conquest’, the latter being ‘army, troops’ and much less frequently ‘battle, war, campaign’. Their area of contact is thus rather limited.

Certainly, rejecting an etymology solely on semantic grounds (and not very strong ones at that) is always a bold move, yet the onus to provide sufficient proof is on the proponents of the foreign origin, not of the native one. To quote G. Doerfer (1963-1975, II, 405/828) defending the native character of Old Turkic *bäg* ‘the head of a clan, or tribe, a subordinate chief’: “Warum soll [es] unbedingt aus einer fremden Quelle stammen? Warum kann es denn a priori und ganz und gar nicht ursprünglich tü. sein?”.[15]

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[14] Incidentally, the meaning ‘*стар.* ме́стные вла́сти; ме́стный гарнизо́н’ given by G. Doerfer (see quotation 3.2 above) belongs to the compound *shǒu-tǔ* 守土, not to the *shǒu* 守 itself (KRS, 336/3255).

[15] As a marginal note: Old Turkic *süŋ-üš-* ‘to fight (one another)’, *süŋ-üš* ‘a battle, jousting’, *süŋ-üg* ~ *süŋ-ü* (< **süŋ-gü*) (two different formations appearing in disparate texts) ‘a lance, spear’ may all be reduced to some original verb **süŋ-* (Clauson 1972, 834, 842, s.vv.; Erdal 1991, I, 205, 270; II, 566-567). Nevertheless, this **süŋ-* (non-attested?, but cf. *süŋ-* ‘to conceal oneself; to go into, to intrude’ – DLT, II, 351/614; III, 171, s.v.) cannot possibly be connected to *sü* ‘army; battle, war’ as in Turkic there is no denominal verbal suffix of the shape *-*ŋ-* (Clauson 1972, XXXIX-XLVIII; Erdal 1991, II), although either of these two words, *sü* and (*)*süŋ-*, might at some point have influenced the other’s form or meaning.

4. Conclusions

Summing up,

- the Old Turkic word discussed above must absolutely be described as having two meanings: '1. army, troops; 2. battle, war, campaign',
- all the philological evidence suggests that its form was *sü*, everything pointing to the contrary being ambiguous,
- the Chinese etymology of the word cannot be ruled out, but more importantly, it cannot be proved beyond all doubt either.

Finally, it must be concluded – to one's great disappointment – that the main entries of some larger dictionaries (DTS and Clauson 1972 are meant here in particular) are not always to be fully trusted as regards the definitions given by them.

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S y m b o l s

*	reconstructed, either comparatively or internally, or by both methods
✦	constructed for the sake of argument (expected, postulated, searched for); hence, non-existent
> <	historical development
↠ ↞	borrowing
~	alternation

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