ANDRÁS RÓNA-TAS

Böz in the Altaic World

According to an earlier suggestion of Pelliot now made plausible by Ecsedy[1] the Chinese transcriptions *p'o* 勃 ~ *po* 勣 denoting a kind of linen cloth and given by the Turk kagan Tu-lan to the Chinese court as a gift in 588, is reflecting the word *böz*. This Altaic word had been connected long ago with Greek *βύσσος*.[2] The history of this word is important because it reflects the role played by the Altaic people in the early connections between China and the Western World. Two questions, however, have to be solved: What did the word actually denote, and how old is it in the Altaic languages?

1.

The earliest occurrences of the word can be found in the Uigur monuments. In a Buddhist text published by F. W. K. Müller (Uigurica II p. 70 ll. 4–5) we read that one has to write the sacred text . . . *toz-ta*, *yapïrqaq-ta*, *kägdä-tä*, *böz-tä*, *ban-ta* . . ., i. e., "on birch-bark, (palm)-leaves, paper, *böz* and (wooden writing) tablet". F. W. K. Müller translated *böz* as „Baumwolle" and Sir Gerard Clauson (EDPCT 389) as "cotton cloth". In the Chinese text from which the Uigur text has been freely translated, we find only three names of material: *hua-p'i* 樺皮 "birch bark"[3], *po-tieh* 白氎 "white cloth"[4], and *shu-p'i* 樹皮 "the bark of a tree"[5]. It is highly probable that *böz* of the Uigur text is a rendering of the Chinese *po-tieh*, but due to the fact that, in this case, we do not have to deal with a verbatim trans-

[1] See the paper of H. Ecsedy above. On our teamwork see her note 1.

[2] W. Bang, in: APAW 1921, 14.

[3] *Hua* is translated in Matthews' Chinese-English Dictionary No 2219 as "a kind of birch found in Manchuria".

[4] On *po-tieh* see the paper of Ecsedy above, pp. 149–150 and Hamilton, in: BSOAS 31 [1968], 332, 335.

[5] I do not understand why there is made a difference between the two kinds of bark while there is no mention of paper, palm-leaves and the wooden tablet *ban* which is a Chinese loanword in Uigur. On the latter see Sir Gerard Clauson's excellent new etymological dictionary: An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish, Oxford 1972 (= EDPCT), 346. In any case the Chinese text seems to be corrupt and only *po-tieh* and *böz* correspond, which can also be due to the fact that the Uigur translator had another Chinese text before him, and/or he translated it very freely.

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lation, the only certainty we can gain is that *böz* denoted in this text a material on which one could write and which was most likely of white colour.

In another text which is a translation of letters written to and by Hsüan-tsang (d. 664) we again encounter the word *böz*. From a letter of Jñānaprabha from Middle-India we learn that he sent a poem on the *Ṛgveda* with two *böz* (ll. 1809–1810: *ritiwid šlok iki böz birlä*)[6] which had been acknowledged by Hsüan-tsang in his answer (ll. 2047–2052): *yana iki böz, bir qap ritiwid sudur šlokin itmiš siz tägdi*, "further your dispatch of two *böz* and one bundle of *Ṛgveda*-sudur poems reached me". The Chinese original has in the first case *tieh*, in the second *po-tieh*. I do not think that this text is giving an argument in favour of *böz* being fabricated in and imported from India. The Uigur translation is at least two hundred years younger than the Chinese original,[7] and the Uigur translator simply rendered the Chinese word with an Uigur one which he thought to be equivalent in his time. Yet it seems to be highly probable that *böz* for the Uigur translator was the name of a kind of valuable cloth suitable for a gift given by distinguished people to people of a similar social status.

A very interesting passage of the Uigur *Säkiz yükmäk*[8] gives some more hints as to the nature of *böz*. I quote here the translation of Bang-Gabain-Rachmati: „Wie auf dieser Welt (l. 391) die Kette und der Schuß beide längs und quer gehend sich bindend zu Seide (*torqu*), Brokat (*ešgirti*), Baumwollzeug (*böz*) (l. 392) usw., (d. h.) zu einer Materie werden und den Wesen Kleidung (Hend.) und andere Vorteile bietet, (l. 393) so werden auch die Lebewesen – indem die in diesem Sūtra befindlichen achterlei Bewußtseinsarten die Kette (l. 394) und das Glanz-Wissen (skr. *amala-vijñāna*?) der Einschlag (Schuß) sind und sich ständig binden – verstehend, (l. 395) begreifend und wissend den Buddha-Weg betreten und (anderen) Vorteil bringen" (op. cit. 139). *Böz* is here a material which is like silk and brocade and woven with woof and warp. It was used for clothing and "other benefits" and must have been a kind of valuable material. But – at least for the translator – it was already not an exotic kind of cloth whose technique of manufacturing should be miraculous to him.

An Uigur medical text advises those who have a tooth-ache[9] to put the following things in a small bag made of *böz* (*böz qapčuγ-ta*): dung of a black ox cooked with vinegar and dung of a camel of the salty meadows (mixed)

[6] Cf. A. von Gabain, Briefe der uigurischen Hüen-tsang Biographie, in: SPAW 1938, 375, 384.

[7] Cf. A. von Gabain, Die uigurische Übersetzung der Biographie Hüen-tsangs, in: SPAW 1935, 152.

[8] W. Bang-A. von Gabain-G. R. Rachmati, Das buddhistische Sūtra Säkiz Yükmäk, in: SPAW 1934, 138 there written *turqu, iškirti*. The Mongolian and Tibetan parallel texts at my disposal do not contain this passage. But in case there should be such texts it would be irrelevant for our purposes, since they would reflect the Chinese original.

[9] G. R. Rachmati, Zur Heilkunde der Uiguren I, in: SPAW 1930, 458–459.

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with reddish salt. These had to be ground, mixed with wine, and then warmed in a pot. Finally the whole bag had to be treated with the oil of sesame-seeds and put on the aching tooth. At the times when this text was written *böz* had already been a kind of material common enough for use in everyday life. It could not have been woven very loosely since otherwise it would not have been suitable to put the *böz*-bag with its contents into the mouth.

In the Uigur version of the legend of the princes Kalyāṇaṃkara and Pāpaṃkara this word also seems to occur. In the text transcribed by Hamilton[10] we read: *ämäri tïnlïγ-lar čïγarï äŋirär yuŋ äŋirär kentir äŋirär: böz bertätip qars toqïyur taqï yemä adruq uzlar käntü käntü uz išläyür.* Huart read *č[ï]qrï* and translated it as «rouet» while Pelliot supposed a name of a textile unknown to him and preferred the reading *č(a)γay*. Sir Gerard Clauson (EDPCT 412) writes: "The context indicates that it means some kind of textile fibre. Perhaps survives in SE Türki *çige* 'wild hemp, a cord made of wild hemp'." The cited Uigur word is back-vocalic, the Turkic is front-vocalic.[11] Hamilton is turning back to Huart's translation and quotes an inedited Tun-huang MS. where *ekki čïγar-ï böz* is mentioned which Hamilton translated als «deux pièces de toile (tissée avec des fils filés) au rouet». The word *yuŋ* has been translated by Pelliot as «cotton», while by Hamilton as «laine». Kāšγarī knows both meanings, in Uigur texts *yuŋ* is also disseminated (*tarï-*), therefore it is difficult to decide whether we are dealing here with wool or cotton. Its original meaning was "down, soft feather"[12] and it has been only secondarily extended to new materials sim-

[10] R. J. Hamilton, Le conte bouddhique du bon et du mauvais prince en version ouïgure, Paris 1971, 9; cf. P. Pelliot, La version ouïgoure de l'histoire des princes Kalyāṇaṃkara et Pāpaṃkara, in: TP 15 [1914], 230–231.

[11] I should like to quote here only New Uigur *čig-* "to tie together (with a knot), to plait, to weave", *čig, čigik, čigič* "knot", *čigä* "cord", see also M. Räsänen, Versuch eines etymologischen Wörterbuchs der Türksprachen, Helsinki 1969, 110 (= EtWb) where the verb *čig-* and the noun *čigä* „Pflanzenfasern, wilder Hanf, Bindfaden" are separated.

[12] The early occurrences of the meaning "feather" are quoted in EDPCT 910, 941. Sir Gerard supposes a contamination between *yuŋ* "wool" and *yūg* "feather" while Räsänen (EtWb 211) lists the two words under one heading. I think in this case Räsänen is right. The Chuvash word *śüś* "hair" cannot be the continuation of *sač* as it is commonly thought (so Räsänen EtWb 391; Egorov, Ėtimologičeskij slovar' čuvašskogo jazyka 224) but reflects an earlier *ǰulč*, see Kāšγarī *yūlič* "fine goat's hair". The Soyot *yüm*, Altai *ńum, ńun, ńüm*, "feather, down, animal hair" point to a PT *yüŋ* ~ *yuŋ*. The word has an extensive family and *yumšaq* "soft" also pertains here. It is a derivation from **yumuš* preserved in Chuvash as *śămăl*, cf. Chuv. *śăm* "wool". The latter figures in the compound *śăm kayăk(ĕ)* "name of several birds of prey" and denotes "feather(ed)". *Kayăk* is PT *käyik* "wild animal" which became later in Chuvash "bird" from the compound "feathered animal". The original meaning of *kayăk* is preserved in many other compounds as, e. g., *kayăk sïsna* "boar, wild pig". Another word for "wool" is *tĕk* < PT *tük*. This word also has the meaning "feather" in Chuvash and in many other Turkic languages (see the data in Räsänen EtWb 503). As a semantical parallel to "feather ~ animal hair ~ soft" see also Chinese *ts'ui* 毳 "the fine hair on

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ilar to it: wool and cotton. It is evident that the meaning "wool" became established with the nomads and entered the Mongolian language.[13] The puzzle of the word read by Pelliot as *qar(ï)š* was solved by Hamilton, who corrected the reading to *qars* fixing its meaning and the history of the word.[14] The word read by Hamilton as *bertätïp* had been transcribed by Pelliot as *butatïp*, by Clauson as *bodut-*. Pelliot was uncertain of the translation, Clauson suggested "having dyed". In the facsimile I do not see the *-r-*, it is either *b't'tp* or perhaps *bwt'tp* (the ligated *waw* would be in this case unusually small). Perhaps the expression has to be read as *bǫz bu̯tütïp qars toqïyur* "have produced a *böz* and weaved a *qars*" where *bütüt-* would be the causative of *büt-* "to bring to an end, make, produce etc.". In any case, if this word has to be read as *böz* – which seems certain – it was in some relation to *qars*.

From a late Uigur document (USp 73 : 4, EDPCT 390) we learn that a slave-smith (*temirči qarabaš*) and a female slave *bözči* (*ebči qarabaš bözči*) got married. It is sure that *bözči* is here "cotton cloth weaver" and not "seller of *böz*", the former is the meaning of the word not only in Sanglax quoted by EDPCT but also in Modern Kirgiz. Definitively in this case and perhaps also in the former one, we already meet with the fabrication of *böz*. It became a common material.

In texts of the 11–13th centuries *böz* denoted among others a material for a shroud (cf. Qutadγu Bilig, Yugnaki, Nahcu'l-Faradis quoted by EDPCT 389, DTS 97 and Fazylov Starouzbekskij jazyk I, 269). This fact is very interesting, because, according to L. Kákosy,[15] the word ultimately originated from Old Egyptian and denoted there a "whitish-green material used for wrapping the corpse for mumification".

In the modern languages *böz* denotes a kind of coarse cotton. In most of the Turkic-Russian dictionaries it is rendered with "bjaz" which itself is the same word occurring first in 1589 in the Russian sources,[16] and denoting "cotton cloth or material from Persia or Buchara". In some other Turkic

animals, the down on birds. Downy, soft" (Mathews No 6883). See Ecsedy's paper above, note 20.

[13] There are two Mongolian words for "wool": *noγosun* and *ungγasun*. The two words are synonymous (cf. A. Róna-Tas, Feltmaking in Mongolia, in: AOH 16 [1963], 200) and of the same origin: *noγosun* < *nungγasun* > *ungγasun*, and this doublet pertains to Turkic *yuŋ*. The Mongolian words do not have the meaning "feather", which is a semantical argument in favour of its being a Turkic loanword in Mongolian. The original Mongolian word for "feather" is *hedün* ~ *hödün*. It is a problem to be investigated whether it has anything to do with *hüsün* "hair"?

[14] J. Hamilton-N. Beldiceanu, Recherches autour de *qars*, nom d'une étoffe de poil, in: BSOAS 31 [1968], 330–346. This very interesting paper gave much inspiration to our work.

[15] Here I refer to an unpublished paper of L. Kákosy.

[16] Cf. M. Fasmer, Ėtimologičeskij slovar' russkogo jazyka 1, Moscow 1964, 261.

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dictionaries (e. g., Kirgiz, Türkmen, New Uigur) it is defined as "mata", "a kind of home-manufactured coarse cotton cloth". In Hakass it is a generic name for textiles, cloths.

I think that the above data give some hints to the history of the semantical side of the word. The phonetical side will offer some conclusions for its chronology.

2.

The first problem which has to be investigated in connection with the phonetic problems of the history of the word *böz* is its representation in Chuvash. It has long been known that the Chuvash word *pir* "cholst, polotno; linen" is the same word according to its origin[17] as *böz*. Since here a Chuvash *-r* corresponds to *-z* in other Turkic languages the word is of special importance. If *-z* has been in such cases the original sound and *-r* is secondary in Chuvash as it is supposed with good reason by some scholars[18] then it could be argued that *böz* had entered Chuvash before the $z > r$ development. This would be of mutual importance both for the history of the word *böz* and for the history of the $z > r$ development. Benzing supposed that *böz* is a relatively late loanword in Turkic, and thus he found a chronological basis for his assumption that $z > r$ occurred late in the history of Chuvash: first the original intervocalic *-d-* became *-ð-* and *-z-* and then both this and the original *-z-* became *r*.[19] Biišev has correctly pointed out that the development $z > r$ and $d\ (ð) > z > r$ have occurred in different times, the second not earlier than the 11th–12th centuries, the former already in Proto-Turkic times. This is also clear from the Old Chuvash loanwords in Hungarian where Turkic *z* is *r*, but Turkic *d* is *d* and *z*,[20] never *r*. For *r* we have the earliest data from 1230.[21] Now we have two possibilities: the word

[17] Cf. H. Paasonen, Csuvas szójegyzék, Budapest 1908, 103; Egorov, Ėtimologičeskij slovar' 161.

[18] As I tried elsewhere to point out the essence of the question of the so-called rhotazism is not the quality of the original sounds $X_1 > r$ and $X_2 > z$ but the fact that in Chuvash the opposition $X_1 : X_2$ disappeared and also does not exist in Mongolian (cf. Acta Orientalia Havniae 32 [1970], 229; Studia Turcica, Budapest 1971, 396).

[19] J. Benzing, Tschuwaschische Forschungen II, in: ZDMG 94 [1940], 391–398. On p. 398 we read: „Wir kommen somit zum Ergebnis, daß im Alttschuwaschischen das alte urtürkische *ð* als *z* ausgesprochen worden sein muß (bzw. sich im Lauf dieser Sprachperiode in z verwandelt hat) und daß sowohl dieses *z* wie auch das ursprüngliche *z* gemeinsam zu *r* verschoben wurden."

[20] A. Biišev, Sootvetstvie -R/-Z v altajskich jazykach, in: Issledovanija po ujgurskomu jazyku, Alma Ata 1965, 192–205. For the Hungarian representations of Turkic *d* see most recently L. Ligeti, Acta Linguistica Hung. 11 [1961], 32–34 and M. K. Palló in: UAJb 31 [1959], 247–259, UAJb 43 [1971], 79–88 with further references.

[21] Cf. Markwart in: UJb 9 [1929], 79–81 on the Russian transcription of the Volga Bulgarian *turun* ~ *tudun* already discovered by Munkáosi in 1903.

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böz entered into the Turkic languages in Proto-Turkic times, at least before the Chuvash $z > r$ development, or it was borrowed by Chuvash at a much later time, just when the original *d* was already a spirant *ð* or even *z*, but before it became *-r*. I should exclude the first possibility because of the vocalism of the word. The Chuvash *-i-* can go back to a former *e*, but an original *-ö-* (short or long) would never become an *-i-* in Chuvash. Thus the Chuvash word is reflecting an original form **bez* which can be found first in the work of Yugnaki (13th century, in copies of the 15th century) and in the *Tarǰuman turki* of 1343[22]. This form coexists with *böz* in many recent dialects, e. g., in Tatar, Bashkir, Salar, and the form with *-e-* is the common in the most Oghuz languages.[23] The form with *-e-* is certainly of Arabic origin, where it is *bazz*, and we have no reason to suppose an Arabic loanword in Proto-Turkic times. On the other hand, we know that the Arabs and the Arabic language exercised a great influence on the Volga Bulgars, i. e., the close relatives of the Chuvash[24] from the end of the 9th century on, i. e., just in the period when the original *-d* had already changed into a spirant, but had not yet become *-r*.

This case is parallel to the history of the Persian word *adinä* "Friday" which is on a Volga Bulgarian inscription of 1316 already *arnī*[25], and in Modern Chuvash *erne*.

Pir is not the only Chuvash word connected with *böz*, and this has been overlooked still now. We also find a form *pit* in such words as *kălampit*, *kălanpit* (Ašm. VII, 111), *kătampit*, *kălampit* (Paas) and as a loanword Misher *kălambit* (cf. Paasonen; Räsänen EtWb 259). The word has several other dialectal forms as *kalămpi* (Ašm. VI, 39), *katak pir*, *katan pir* (Ašm. VI, 157), *kătan pir*, *katan pir* (Sergeev, Slovar' čuvašskich narodnych govorov, Materialy po čuvašskoj dialektologii IV, Čeboksary 1971). The first word is Arabic كَتَّان *kattān* "flax", Turkic *kätän*, and the second is our word. In case of the form *pit -t* is a substitution for a sound which was not part of the Chuvash phonological system when the word was borrowed. This leads us to the assumption that the original sound which later developed

[22] The Turkic part of this important source has recently been reedited: A. K. Kuryšžanov, Issledovanie po leksike «tjurksko-arabskogo slovarja», Alma Ata 1970, but without correcting the wrong dating of Houtsma which had been convincingly done earlier by B. Flemming (Ein alter Irrtum bei der chronologischen Einordnung des Tarğuman turkī wa ʿağamī wa muġali, in: Der Islam 40 [1968], 226–229).

[23] Cf. Tatar *böz*, *bäz*, Bashkir *bäz*, Salar *boz*, *buz*, *bäz*, Turkmen *bīz*, Azeri *bez*, Osmanli *bez*, New Uigur *bez*.

[24] There have been dialectological differences among the idioms of the several Chuvash-Bulgarian tribes even in the earliest periods. The language reflected by the Volga Bulgarian inscriptions was a dialect closely related to but not identical with the predecessor of the present Chuvash language.

[25] Inscription No 14 in G. V. Jusupov's Vvedenie v bulgaro-tatarskuju ėpigrafiku, Moscow-Leningrad 1960, on line 8, cf. A. Róna-Tas-S. Fodor, in: Epigraphica Bulgarica 1973, 149.

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into *r* had been substituted by Chuvash with the two phonemes nearest to it.

Chuvash later borrowed the word once more in the form *pŭs*. This form came from Tatar *büz*, and it denotes in Chuvash "mitkal, kolenkor; calico".

There is also a fourth form in Chuvash. We find the following dialectal forms: *piśi, piśiki, piśikki, piśixi, piśixxi, piśśi* (Ašm. IX, 235–236), *piśixi* (Paasonen, P, Sp), *piśixxi* (Sirotkin), *puśaxxi, puśi, puśśi, piśaxxi, piśi, piśśi, piśxi, pixxi* (Sergeev 98). The word denotes "girdle" and is a compound. The second part is most probably *śăxï* "tie", and the first is our word. The compound can be analysed as *puśa*+*śïxă*+*i*, a haplological form with a possessive suffix as *ĕneri* "colostrum" from *ĕne irri* (*ĕne*+ *ĭra*+*i*). The various dialectal forms are due to assimilations. The form **puśa* is reflecting an original form **bŭze*[26], i. e., a disyllabic form. There is no disyllabic form in Turkic, but we can find it in the other Altaic language groups.

The earliest Mongolian data for *böz* can be found in the *Tarǰuman* (1345) in the Turkic form *böz*, and in Ibn Muhanna (first half of the 14th century) as *biz*. In the *Hua yi yi yü* (1368–1389) we come across the Mongolian form *bös* where Mongolian final *-s* is a substitution for Turkic *-z* absent from the Mongolian phonological system. Its meaning is "textile, linen, cotton, a material for making clothes". There is also another Mongolian word *büse* with the meaning "girdle (worn around outer garments and made of textiles)". The semantic differentiation of the monosyllabic and disyllabic forms in Mongolian is secondary and relatively late. The disyllabic word occurs first in the *Secret History*, it can also be found in Ibn Muhanna as *büse*, in the *Hua yi yi yü*, in *Mukaddimat al-Adab* and in the *Vocabulary of Istanbul*[27]. The dialects show a variegated picture: Khalkha *bös, büs* "cloth", *büs(en)* "girdle", Ordos *bös, büs* "cloth", *büse* "girdle", Buriat *büd* "cloth", *bühe, behe* "girdle", Kalmück *bös* "cloth", *büsü* "girdle", Mogol *büz* "linen, cotton", Dahur *buse* (Martin), *buri* (Poppe) "cloth", *besĕ, büs* (Poppe), *pïza, bïze* (Ivanovskij) "girdle", Tunghsiang *bosi* "cloth", *piše* "girdle", Monguor *bos, bose* "cloth", *pudzē* "girdle", Shera Yögur *pse* (Mannerheim), *bos* (Malov) "girdle".

The older form is the disyllabic one which came into contamination with the later monosyllabic form. This fact can be seen in the Manchu-Tunguzian data. The oldest form can be found in Jurchen as *busu* (Grube 559), and it occurs in Manchu as *boso*, in Nanaj as *bȯsȯ*, in Ulcha as *bùsù*, in Oroch as *bùsù*, in Orok as *bùsù*, in Solon we find only *büsele-* "to encircle", in Negidal *bȯsȯ, bȯsù*, in the Evenki dialects *büse, bühe*. In Jurchen, Manchu

[26] Long PT *ū* is sometimes *u* in Chuvash, cf. *kŭn* "day" (the length is preserved only in West Osmanli) > Volga Bulgarian *küwen* (*küen*) > Chuvash *kun*. For the (secondary) length of *böz* see Turkmen *bīz*.

[27] L. Ligeti, Un vocabulaire mongol d'Istanboul, in: AOH 14 [1962], 23 in this and in Ligeti's other works (AOH 4 [1955], 124–127, ib. 7 [1957], 111–113, ib. 13 [1962], 202–204) see the bibliography of the relevant sources.

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and the Southern Manchu-Tunguzian dialects the meaning of the word is "linen, cotton cloth", in the Northern Manchu-Tunguzian dialects it is in Negidal "linen" and in Evenki "girdle", here also pertains the Solon data.[28] The Southern Manchu-Tunguzian words preserved an earlier Mongolian form and meaning while the Northern dialects reflect the more recent Mongolian development.

These facts lead us to conclude that in the Altaic world we have to deal with at least two forms, a monosyllabic one (Turkic *böz*, *bez*) and a disyllabic one (Chuvash *pusa*, Mongolian and Manchu-Tunguzian *büse*, *büsü*, *bösö*) while both Chuvash (*pir*, *pit*, *püs*) and Mongolian (*bös*, *büs*) have the monosyllabic forms as later loanwords.

The historical relationship between the mono- and disyllabic forms are of great importance, because it is a well-known fact that we find a series of words where Turkic has monosyllables (*kök* "blue", *ikiz* "double, twins") and Mongolian disyllables (*köke*, *ikire*). Since here we have an undoubtedly foreign word it would not seem hopeless that this loanword can help us solve the debated question of the so-called Mongolian "plus vowel". But this is only the case if we are dealing with one and the same word.

As we have seen the monosyllabic form is documented from the 6th century in the Chinese sources. This form could already be of Arabic origin which had been monosyllabic. The disyllabic form seems to be older. In cases before the 6th century we have to look for other non-Altaic languages. In the Semitic world the word is very old. It will be the task of scholars in Semitic studies to investigate the history of the word; I should like to quote here only the most important data: Akkadian *būṣu*, Middle Hebrew, Phoenician *būṣ*, Old South Arabic *bwṣ*, Arabic *bazz*, Arameic *būṣā* (W. Baumgartner, Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon, Leiden ^{3}1967, 111 b), Syriac *būṣā* (acc. *būṣn*) (C. Brockelmann, Lexikon Syriacum, Halle ^{2}1928). There also exists a modern Arabic form *bisä* (Vollers, ZDMG 51 [1897], 293) which seems to be – as Ethiopian *bīsōs* – a reloan from Greek. The earliest Greek data is from the 5th century B. C. and is of West Semitic origin.[29]

From the above two languages can be taken into account: Syriac and Greek. The Greek form definitely reflects an originally non-Greek word, but it is uncertain whether it had been monosyllabic (*bys*) or disyllabic (*byso* or similar), both would have been adapted into the Greek system as *byssos*. Syriac had a disyllabic form. Syriac merchants and missionaries

[28] For the Manchu-Tunguzian data I have also used the manuscript of the new comparative dictionary of the Manchu-Tunguzian languages compiled under the direction of V. I. Cincius, Leningrad. This highly important work is in print, and its first volume will appear soon.

[29] I have to offer my sincere thanks to H. Ecsedy for checking the Chinese and to K. Czeglédy for his help in finding the Semitic data. Laufer, Sino-Iranica 674, wrote that the word is absent from the Iranian languages. This has to be reexamined.

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reached China in the 6th century or earlier and had close contact with the rising power of the Turkic tribes. From the phonetic point of view the Syriac form appears more likely to be the original form, but there must be further studies to solve this problem.

It cannot be excluded that we have to deal with three original forms. It seems to be unlikely that the labial vowel of *böz* is due to an internal Turkic development, though also we have to take into account this possibility. Since the Arabic form appears with an illabial vowel, the monosyllabic form with a labial vowel could then only be of Greek origin. Were this so, then only the Syriac form remains as a possible candidate for the origin of the disyllabic form. In this case we were confronted with a historical contamination of three different forms of the same original: Syriac **bûse*, Greek **bûs* and Arabic *bazz*. This might then have caused the semantic variety of the word-group. *Böz* denoted in Turkic a valuable textile of foreign origin. From the 8th century on it became a term of fine and later of coarse cotton cloth. It also denoted linen and girdle made of these materials.

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