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IS THE TURKIC *US-* ‘TO BE THIRSTY’ A LOANWORD FROM MONGOLIC? AN OVERVIEW OF MONGOLIC LOANWORDS IN OLD TURKIC

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Abstract

The present study questions whether the Old Turkic verb *us-* ‘to be thirsty’ is derived from the nominal base **u* ‘water’, which is attested as such in Kitan and as **usun* in Common Mongolic. Since there is no denominal verbal formative $+s-$ in Turkic, *us-* must be regarded as a simplex. Since both **u* ‘water’ and $+(A)s-$ are present in Mongolic, the Turkic verb is considered to be a loanword from Pre-Proto-Mongolic **us-*, which was replaced in Proto-Mongolic by **umdaas-* ‘to be thirsty’.

1. Introduction

The Proto-Turkic word for ‘water’ can be reconstructed as **sib^o* or **sīb^o* if the form in the *Dīwān Luyāt at-Turk* is taken at face value. This form yielded the Common Turkic *suv* (~ *sūv*) and the Bulgar Turkic *šiv*. Proto-Indo-European is reconstructed as having at least two different words for ‘water’: **wódǵ* and **h₂ep-* (Mallory and Adams 2006: 125–126), and the same may be true for Proto-Turkic. The second Turkic word for ‘water’ may be contained in the Common Turkic verb *us-* ‘to be thirsty’ < **u+s-* < **u* ‘water’. The verb in question is attested in Old Uyghur and the DLT (Clauson 1972: 241; Wilkens 2021: 805). Its derivative *us-uk-* ‘to be overcome by thirst’ occurs in an interlinear translation of the Quran into Early Middle Turkic (Boeschoten 2022: 374), although it subsequently seems to be forgotten in the

Late Middle Turkic and modern Turkic languages. However, a merger of this verb with the Common Turkic *suvsä-* ‘to be thirsty’ survives in the Uyghur *usa-* ~ *ussa-* ‘to be thirsty’ as well as in the Yakut *utat-* ‘to become thirsty’ and *utax* ‘thirst; drink, beverage’. A possible relationship between the Turkic *us-* ‘to be thirsty’ and the Mongolic *usun* ‘water’ has already been suggested by Ramstedt (1952: 188) and Räsänen (1969: 516b).¹ The alleged Turkic noun **u* is identical to the Pre-Proto-Mongolic **u* ‘water’, which yielded the Kitan [烏] **u* ‘water (水)’ (Shimunek 2017: 376) and the Common Mongolic **usun* ‘water’ (Nugteren 2011: 535). If the assumed derivation **u+s-* is correct, a denominal verbal formative *+s* must be postulated for Turkic.

The present study investigates the possible existence of a denominal suffix *+s-* in Turkic and a denominal suffix *+(A)s-* in Mongolic. In this context, the question arises whether a second word for ‘water’ ever existed in Proto-Turkic, and whether the Old Turkic *us-* is inherited or of foreign origin.

2. Turkic *+s-*

A clear derivation with *+s-* is difficult to find in Turkic. The possible derivatives are listed below.

- (1) CT *bus-* ‘to hide (intransitive)’ (Clauson 1972: 371) < **bu+s-* < **bu* ‘secret, hidden’ > **bu+la-* → CM **bula-* ‘to hide, to bury (transitive)’ (Nugteren 2011: 290).
- (2) EMT *kars-* ~ *kas-* ‘to clap one’s hands’ (Boeschoten 2022: 240) < **kari+s-* < CT *kari* ‘forearm, upper arm’ (Clauson 1972: 644–645).
- (3) DLT *kürs-* ‘to fill up with blood and fat’ (Clauson 1972: 746) < **kür+s-* < *kür* ‘strong, sturdy, fat, stout, well-fed, etc.’ (Clauson 1972: 735).
- (4) QA *yelsi-* ‘to fan’ (Boeschoten 2022: 408) < **yēl+is-* < *yēl* ‘wind’ (Clauson 1972: 916–917).

The base of (1) is highly hypothetical and unattested in Turkic and the derivation in (2) is semantically unconvincing. The verb in (4), on the other hand, can be regarded as a *+sI-* derivative, even though the verbal formative in question forms intransitive verbs. Moreover, *+sI-* verbs express the similarity of their subjects to the base nominals (Erdal 1991: 534–535). In the case of *yelsi-* we can, therefore, speak of a metathesised form of **yelis-*.

In my opinion, the only derivative that can be accepted with any certainty is *kürs-* in (3), which is a hapax legomenon in the DLT. Despite Clauson (1972: 746) considering a derivation from *kür* with *+sA-* “of course impossible”, Dankoff and Kelly (1982–1985: 2/366, fn. 4) argued that *kürs-* is a back-formation of *kürsä-*, but that *+sA-* generally denotes ‘to wish, desire or long for the base nominal’ (Erdal 1991: 528–529). In the case of *kürs-* we can speak of a formative *+s-*. However, a single instance is not sufficient to prove the more widespread existence of this formative.

¹ Ramstedt took *usa-* for the original form and treated it under the suffix *+sA-*.

3. Mongolic +(A)s-

Examples of the denominal verbal suffix +(A)s- in Mongolic are more transparent and more numerous. The suffix has been discussed by Szabó (1943: 39 §86), Street (1957: 63–64), Godziński (1985: 62–63), and Kempf (2013: 178–180). The main function of the suffix is to denote being provided with or being deprived of the nominal base. The suffix is given by Kempf (2013: 178–180) as +(i)s-. However, CM **öles-* and the WM *nigüles-* show that the connective vowel was /A/. The clearest examples are listed below.

- (1) CM **bayas-* ‘to be glad, rejoice’ (Nugteren 2011: 279) < **baya+s-* < **baya* > CM **baya+r* ‘joy, happiness’ (Nugteren 2011: 279).
- (2) CM **emüs-* ‘to put on, to wear (clothes)’ (Nugteren 2011: 330) < **emü+s-* < **emü* > CM **emü+dün* ‘trousers’ (Nugteren 2011: 329).
- (3) CM **hünis-* ~ **hünüs-* ‘to smell (transitive)’ (Nugteren 2011: 370) < **hüni+s-* < **hüni* > CM **hüni+r* ‘smell, odour, aroma’ (Nugteren 2011: 369–370).²
- (4) MM [客亦思] *keyis-* ~ [克亦思] *keyyis-* ‘to blow (of wind) (刮)’ (Kuribayashi 2009: 269) < **kei+s-* < CM **kei* ‘wind’ (Nugteren 2011: 409).
- (5) WM *nigüles-* ‘to pity, be compassionate, merciful, sympathetic; to show grace, kindness’ (Lessing 1995: 582) < **niül+es-* < CM **niül* ‘sin’ (Nugteren 2011: 162).
- (6) CM **öles-* ‘to be hungry’ (Nugteren 2011: 473) < **öl+es-* < CM **öl* ‘nutritiousness; food, hunger’ (Sun 1990: 541).³
- (7) CM **sonas-* ‘to hear’ (Nugteren 2011: 500) < **sona+s-* < **sona* > CM **sona+r* ‘hearing’ (Sun 1990: 606).
- (8) CM **umdaas-* ‘to be thirsty’ (Nugteren 2011: 532) < **umdaa+s-* < CM **umdaan* ‘drink, beverage’ (Nugteren 2011: 531–532).

4. Old Mongolic Loanwords in Old Turkic and Proto-Bulgar Turkic

Given the data above, it is likely that the Old Turkic *us-* ‘to be thirsty’ is a loanword from the Pre-Proto-Mongolic **u+s-* ‘id.’. Although such a verb is not attested in either Kitan or Mongolic, the base **u* ‘water’ was certainly present and the formative +(A)s- was productive. Nothing speaks against a possible formation of **u+s-* ‘to be deprived of water’ > ‘to be thirsty’ in prehistoric Mongolic. This verb subsequently seems to have been replaced by the longer form **umdaas-* ‘to be thirsty’ in Proto-Mongolic.

There is a modest bibliography on Mongolic loanwords in Old Turkic, which includes the works of Clark (1977), Doerfer (1985: 163–169; 1992; 1993) and Schönig (2005: 140), who offered a summary of previous etymologies. In addition, there are

² Contrary to Kempf (2013: 180), the word in the *Secret History of the Mongols* must be read as *huni* ‘smoke’ (< CM **hunin* ‘id.’) (de Rachewiltz 2004–2013: 637; Nugteren 2011: 364).

³ CM **öles-* may also be regarded as a loanword from the Old Turkic *ölšä-* ‘to be dizzy and faint from hunger’ attested in the DLT (Dankoff and Kelly 1982–1985: 1/236).

several studies that do not deal directly with the subject, but which posit Mongolic loanwords in Old Turkic.

Clark (1977: 125) examined 110 Turkic words, most of which were cited from Martti Räsänen's etymological dictionary *Versuch eines etymologischen Wörterbuchs der Türksprachen* published in 1969. He considered only three words to "stand the best chance of being Mongol loans", all of which occur in the DLT: *čakir* 'blue(-eyed)', *turumtāy* 'a bird of prey, a hunting bird', *ula* 'waymark'. Their possible donor forms in Mongolic are *čakir* 'very white, light, snow white; white spots on fingernails or on the feathers of a bird' (Lessing 1995: 162), *turumtai* 'male of any kind of hawk; small-sized birds of prey' (Lessing 1995: 827), and **aula* (~ **uula*) 'mountain' (Nugteren 2011: 275) respectively. These nouns are currently known to be attested in Old Uyghur: *čakir* 'blue', *turumtay* 'a species of falcon', *ula* ~ *ülä* 'waymark' (Wilkins 2021: 218, 761, 822). Of these Turkic words, only *čakir* 'blue, blue-grey' is likely to be a Mongolic loanword because it certainly has a Mongolic root: **ča+kir*⁴ < **ča* 'white, bright; snow' (Khabtagaeva 2022: 475) > **čagaan* 'white', **čai-* 'to become white or bright', **časun* 'snow' (Nugteren 2011: 298–299).

Two Old Turkic words not discussed by Clark, namely the Orkhon Turkic *balbal* ~ *balbar*⁵ 'stone pillar' and the Old Uyghur *nairag* 'secondary beauty feature of a Buddha (anuvyañjana)' can both be considered possible borrowings from Pre-Proto-Mongolic or Para-Mongolic. Tekin (1968: 73, 110; 2003: 61) posited that the Old Turkic *balbal* is a borrowing from the Mongolic **barimal* 'statue', derived from **bari-* 'to build'. Doerfer (1985: 165; 1993: 79) fully agreed with Tekin on the Mongolic origin of *balbal*, yet Róna-Tas and Berta (2011: 91) were somewhat sceptical of this suggestion. The Old Uyghur *nairag*, which already occurs in the *Maitrisimit nom bitig* (both mss.), is certainly a pre-Yuan Mongolic loanword in Turkic. Erdal (2004: 104) and Wilkins (2021: 484) noted that *nairag* may be of Kitan origin.

In his book on Mongolic loanwords in the Tungusic languages, Doerfer (1985: 163–169) devoted several pages to the Rouran (柔然) loanwords in Old Turkic. Doerfer regarded the titles *ba'atur*, *xa'atun*, *xa'an*, and *tarxan* as borrowings from Rouran because of the *x-*, *-x-*, *-'* and the feminine suffix *+tun*. According to Doerfer, the Old Turkic *taloy* 'sea' and the title *tegin* 'prince' (pl. *tegit*) also belong to this group because the former contains a diphthongoid, and the plural of the latter is formed with *+t*. He added *lačın* 'falcon', *lagzın* 'pig, swine', *tudun* 'a title', and *bodun* 'people' because they end in *-n* as do the above titles. Doerfer explicitly connected several lexical items with Mongolic and Para-Mongolic roots: *†eltävër* 'a title' (recte *elitvär*) (← Mo. *elde-* 'to drive, to chase'), *†kürävër* (recte *kürävır*⁶) 'a title' (← CM **kür-* 'to reach, to arrive'), *balbal* 'statue of a slain enemy' (< **bari-mal* ← CM **bari-* 'to build'), *yalavač* 'envoy' (< **jala-va+čī* ← Mo. *jala-* 'to invite'), *ügä* 'counsellor' (← CM **ügä* 'word'), *yadag* 'pedestrian' (← CM **yada-* 'to be unable'), *balka* ~ *balga* 'hammer' (← Rouran **palūka*

⁴ See Khabtagaeva (2001: 119) for the *+kir* suffix in the Mongolic names for colours.

⁵ This form occurs in the runiform Yenisei inscription Tuva D (E 51) line 4.

⁶ This rare title occurs in the runiform manuscript Or. 8212/76 in the Sir Aurel Stein Collection of the British Library.

> CM **haluka* ‘(small) hammer’), *hülkär* ‘Pleiades’ < **pülkär* (← Rouran **pülkär*). Doerfer listed many more words that he thought might be of foreign origin because of their semantics or syllabic structure: *uruñu* ‘a title’, *altun* ‘gold’, *toroñot* (recte *uruñot*) ‘general’, *kanat* ‘wing’, *alpagut* ‘warrior’, *bayagut* ‘rich merchant’, *bulit* ‘cloud’, *savgat* ‘gift, present’,⁷ *erkin* ‘a title’, *yavgu* ‘a title’, *boyla* ‘a title’, *bāñikö* ‘eternal’, *atan* ‘gelded camel’, *bugra* ‘camel stallion’, *tävä* ~ *täväy* ‘camel’, *†iñän* (recte *ingän*) ‘female camel’, *čigāñ* ‘poor’, *yalvar-* ‘to beg’, *†kövrüg* (recte *küvrüg*) ‘drum’, *adaš* ‘comrade’, *soñkor* ‘gerfalcon’, *togan* ‘falcon’, *tümän* ‘ten thousand’, *čolpan* ‘Venus’, *ülkär* ‘Pleides’, *yigdä* ‘jujube tree’, *yipar* ‘musk’, *čodīn* ‘bronze’.

Erdal (1991: 336, fn. 383) argued that “*yelvi* must have been borrowed from what appears in Early Mo[ngolian] as *elbe(+sün)* and in Written Mo[ngolian] as *ilbe*, *ilbi*, with the initial *y*^o added by analogy with *yel*” because *yelvi* cannot be connected with *yel* ‘wind’. Nugteren (2011: 375) reconstructs the Common Mongolic word in question as **ilbi* ‘magic; sleight of hand, conjuring tricks’.⁸ Besides **ilbi*, Mongolic also has *yelbi* ~ *yilbi* ~ *yilvi* (Lessing 1995: 432–433) and *jilbi* (Lessing 1995: 1054) with similar meanings. The former forms are regarded by Nugteren as variants of **ilbi*. The latter, which lives on in Kalmyk as *ilw-jilw* ‘deception, trick, magic’, is not a variant but rather a doublet. Erdal ignored the fact that a few Turkic words with a *y-* onset entered Mongolic with a vocalic onset: WM *ob* ‘trickery, deceit, fraud, intrigue, ruse; strange manner’ (Lessing 1995: 598) ← CT *yōp* ~ *yōpi* ‘trick, deceit, fraud’ (Clauson 1972: 870; Boeschoten 2022: 418) (cf. DLT *ōp* *ōp* ‘one says to a man when he boasts about something and fails to carry it out’), WM *ögse-* ~ *ögsö-* ‘to ascend, go upstream’ (Lessing 1995: 632) ← CT *yügsä-* ‘to be high or tall, to rise, to be elevated’ (Clauson 1972: 916; Boeschoten 2022: 429; Wilkens 2021: 923). In my view, the Old and Middle Turkic *yelvi* is a syncopated form of CT **yeläbi*, derived from **yel+ä-* or, less likely, **yel+lä-*,⁹ which also yielded *yeläyü* ‘deceptive, illusory, illusionary, magical, vain, apparent, magical, false, illusory, illusion’ (Wilkens 2021: 886). As shown by Erdal (2004: 59), although less readily, /A/ can also be syncopated in Old Uyghur. The etymology of Ragagnin (2022: 436), who derives the Mongolic and Turkic forms from the Syriac *d.b.l.s* ‘devil’ (← Greek διάβολος), is unfortunately somewhat far-fetched. In summary, CM **ilbi* (or **elbi*) and **jilbi* were borrowed from the early unattested forms **elbi* and **jelbi*, both of which were changed from CT **yelbi* (< **yeläbi*).

⁷ The word is attested no earlier than Middle Turkic (Boeschoten 2022: 282). However, it occurs as a loanword in the Russian *сайрар* ‘war booty’ as early as 1174, leading Doerfer (1963–1975: 1/347) to the assumption that the word was already present in Old Turkic. The Turkic form has no cogent etymology, and the Mongolic form is “un-Mongolic” because of the rare diphthong *au*. Both may be borrowings from an unattested Middle Kitan form **sawqa* or **sawxa* < **sabka-gu*, the base of which is likely related to the Common Turkic *savir-* ‘to scatter’, possibly derived from **sab-*. Note that CM **taulai* ‘hare’ (Nugteren 2011: 514) is another possible loanword from the Middle Kitan **tawlya* ‘rabbit, hare’ (Shimunek 2017: 373).

⁸ As pointed out by de Rachewiltz (2004–2013: 629), the word *elbesün* ‘magic (not glossed)’ in the *Secret history of the Mongols* (§174, §189) undoubtedly belongs to **ilbi*.

⁹ The WM *dele-* ‘to wave, flap (as wings); to fan’ (Lessing 1995: 248) and the Kitāb al-Idrāk *yäläs* {*yel+ä-s*} ‘breeze’ (Boeschoten 2022: 408) rather suggest **yelä-*. The Old Uyghur *yelläyü* ‘blowing like a wind’ (Wilkens 2021: 886), which contrasts with *yeläyü*, speaks for the primacy of the single /l/ in *yeläyü*.

Doerfer (1992: 52–56) added a few more words to his list of possible Mongolic loanwords in Old Turkic: OT *kargu* ~ *karguy* ‘a watch-tower with a beacon on the top to give raid warnings’ (Clauson 1972: 653; Wilkens 2021: 336) ← CM **kara-* ‘to look at’ (according to Schönig from **kara.hu*¹⁰), OT *ilär-* ‘to be dimly visible’ (Clauson 1972: 150; Boeschoten 2022: 147) ← Mo. *ilere-* ‘to become clear, plain, evident, reveal oneself, show, appear’ < CM **ile* (?**hile*) ‘clear, visible, obvious, evident’ (Nugteren 2011: 375), CT *kärtü* ~ *kertü* ‘true, truthful, loyal, truth’ (Clauson 1972: 738–739; Wilkens 2021: 366–367; Boeschoten 2022: 164) ← Mo. *gere+tü* ‘shiny’ < CM **gere* ‘brightness; torch; witness’ (Nugteren 2011: 341), CT *sīrok* ‘a pole’ (Turkmen *sīrik*) (Clauson 1972: 848; Wilkens 2021: 611; Boeschoten 2022: 294) ← Mo. **sīrok* < **sīro* ‘pointed stick; spit’ (Nugteren 2011: 493). None of these alleged loanwords provide clear evidence of the direction of borrowing. The Mongolic words can be explained as loans from the extinct bases of the Turkic words.

Aydemir (2005: 123–124) argued that the Turkic *töz* ‘dust, dusty, powder’ originated from the Kitan **to’us*¹¹ or a form similar to **to’us*ⁱ, which changed from the Xianbei-Tabgač **toyusin*,¹² a cognate of CM **toasun* ‘dust’ (Nugteren 2011: 521). The examples given by Aydemir for the change **-s > -z*, *böz* and *kāz*, are unfortunately problematic.¹³ Shimunek (2017: 398), on the contrary, suggested that the Turkic word is probably a reflex of an early loanword from Tocharian, cf. the Tocharian A *tor* and B *taur* ‘dust’, for which Adams (2013: 330) proposed an Indo-European etymology. Both etymologies are complicated by the existence of WM *toro* ‘flying dust’ (< CM **tora*), the Manchu *toron* ‘flying dust, a dust storm’ and the Common Turkic verb *toz-* ‘to be dusty; to stir up (dust); to rise, (odour, stench) to ascend’. The Turkic *töz* may have evolved through haplology from **toz-uz* {toz-Xz} or its antecedent form **tor₂Xr₂*. Note that the sequence *°zVz°* is not attested in Old Turkic, so the long vowel is the result of haplology.

Tezcan (2020: 70–71) postulated that the Mongolic *boğul* ‘slave’ entered Turkic as **boğul*, was suffixed with the collective suffix *+an* and yielded the Old Turkic *bulun* ‘prisoner’ (Clauson 1972: 343).¹⁴ Tezcan summarized this development as **boğul+an > *bolon > bolun*. Two facts speak against this hypothesis. The Turkic noun is attested in the Brāhmī script as *bulun* (Maue 2015: 404), and the form in the DLT has no vowel length in the first syllable (Dankoff and Kelly 1982–1985: 1/305). The attested *bulun* contradicts the hypothetical **bōlun* assumed by Tezcan.

¹⁰ Note that Written Mongol also has *qarayan* ‘the act of watching from an elevated place; watchtower, elevated place for lookout’ (Lessing 1995: 933), which may go back to **karagu.n*.

¹¹ The Late Kitan form in question is reconstructed by Shimunek (2017: 375) as [陶猥思] **t^hawuys* / **t^hawis*. Furthermore, it is analyzed as being composed of **t^haw* ‘dirt, soil’ with a suffix of **-uys* or **-is*.

¹² This and other reconstructions, e.g., **tayušin*, **toyočĭn* are the work of Ligeti (1970: 287–290). Shimunek (2007: 97) reconstructed it as [鳥侯秦] **tauGusin*, while Doerfer (1985: 161) and Vovin (2007: 193) suggested **toyojin* and **toyočĭn* respectively.

¹³ I assume that Aydemir implied the Greek βύσσοσ ‘linen’ and the unattested Tocharian A **kas* ‘goose’ (= B *kents*) as their origin.

¹⁴ The etymology of Tezcan has already been mentioned by Sertkaya (2009: 24).

Róna-Tas and Berta (2011: 516–517, 667–668) suspected that *kebel* ‘bosom, breast’ and *ölyv* ‘hawk, buzzard, *Buteo buteo*’ might be borrowings from West Old Turkic forms that were themselves borrowed from an Old Mongolic language. The corresponding forms in Common Mongolic would be **keeli* (< **kepelī*) ‘belly, abdomen’ and **helie* (< **pelige*) ‘name for various birds of prey, usually kite’ (Nugteren 2011: 353, 408) respectively. In fact, the Pre-Proto-Mongolic **kepelī* may have been borrowed from PBT **kāpālī*, a cognate of CT **kāpās* > Turkish *gebeş* ‘with a swollen stomach’. The latter is derived from CT **kāpā* > *kābā* ‘with a swollen stomach, corpulent; pregnant’ (Clauson 1972: 691; Boeschoten 2022: 155), from which the Old Uyghur *kebār-* (read *kepār-?*) ‘to swell (of belly)’ (Clauson 1972: 691; Wilkens 2021: 361) was derived. CM **helie*, on the other hand, has no cognate in the Turkic languages as far as we can determine. If the Old Mongolic **pelige*, probably a derivation of **peli-* ‘to float; to soar’, entered Proto-Bulgar Turkic as **pāligǎ*, it would yield **hālig* in the Old Bulgar period, which in turn would yield the Hungarian *ölyv*.

In his recently published book, Shimunek (2017) regarded many Old Turkic words as loanwords from various Mongolic languages such as Tabgač and Proto-Serbi. According to the author, the Old Turkic *koñ* ‘sheep’ (fn. 425), *törü-* ‘to be born’ (fn. 490), *katun* ‘empress’ (p. 130, fn. 55), *kapig* ‘gate’ (fn. 54), *tor* ‘net, mesh’ (fn. 179), *imga* ~ *yimga* ‘goat’ (fn. 216), *käč-* ‘to cross over, to pass’ (fn. 271) *boxtay* ~ *boxtuy* ‘clothes bag’ (p. 161), *yam* ‘a posting station’ (fn. 238), *tariğ* ‘grain, cereals, bread, millet, agriculture, tilling land’ (fn. 498) and *sag* ‘good’ (fn. 464) are borrowings from Mongolic. Of these words, only the Late Old Uyghur *yam* is definitely of Mongolic origin (Wilkens 2021: 859; Boeschoten 2022: 392). The Common Turkic *kōñ*, *kātun*, *tōr* and *sāg* must be excluded from this list because they exhibit primary long vowels. *kap-ig* (< PT **kap-* ‘to close, to enclose’ > CT *kap-* ~ *kapa-*, Chuvash *xup-*) and *tari-g* (< PT **tari-* ‘to sow’ > CT *tari-*¹⁵), on the other hand, are morphologically transparent in Turkic similarly to their alleged donor forms in Mongolic. The verbal bases **kaa-* (< **kapa-*) ‘to close’ and **tari-* ‘to sow, plant’ were also present in Common Mongolic (Nugteren 2011: 395, 512–513). The alternation *imga* ~ **yimga* makes it likely that the earlier form of this word was **himga*. However, the onset **h-* is absent in CM **imaan* ‘goat’ (Nugteren 2011: 372). This suggests that the direction of borrowing was from Turkic to Mongolic. As far as *käč-* is concerned, the alleged donor form is surprisingly not verbal but nominal.

Vovin (2021: 529–531) also offered a list of possible Mongolic loanwords in Turkic. Unlike Shimunek, Vovin’s list is based on the supposedly “Mongolic” vocabulary of the Khüis Tolgoi and Bugut inscriptions. In many cases, however, it must be accepted that the direction remains undecided. Nevertheless, *bo[tuy]na* ‘camel calf’ and *ert[e]* ‘early’ are morphologically transparent only in Turkic. *Boto* ‘camel colt’ (already attested in the DLT) and *ēr* ‘early’ (Turkmen *īr*) are consistently attested Turkic words. *Küjü* ‘strength’, *qato* ‘khatun’, *qoñiy* ‘sheep’, *tal-* ‘to plunder, to capture’, and *tar-* ‘to scatter (an enemy)’ do not account for the long vowels in the

¹⁵ Chuvash *tirā* ‘grain, cereal; sowing’ is a cognate of CT *tari-g* ‘cultivated land, seed, crop, grain, wheat’ (Clauson 1972: 537–538).

Turkic *kūč* ‘strength’, *kātun* ‘queen’, *kōn* ‘sheep’, *tāla-* ‘to pillage’ and *tār-* ‘to disperse’ respectively. The “Mongolic” nature of the vocabulary of these inscriptions requires further investigation.

In summary, none of the proposed Mongolic loanwords in Old Turkic, with the exception of the Old Uyghur *nairag*, can be accepted without further investigation. However, I would like to mention another possible Para-Mongolic loanword in Old Turkic, namely *kösün* ‘strength, power, authority’. It occurs in a binome with *küč*. The reading with /ö/ is secured by the Brāhmī spelling *kösön* (Maue 2015: 142), although Erdal (1991: 305) proposed deriving it from *küsä-*. The Brāhmī spelling, however, speaks against this etymology. The Old Turkic *kösün* is possibly a loanword from the Para-Mongolic or Old Kitan **kösün* or **köšün*, which is a cognate with the Pre-Proto-Mongolic **küčün* ‘strength, force’ (← PT or PBT **kūčū*¹⁶ > CT *kūč*). The latter yielded CM **küčün* ~ **küčün* ‘id.’ (Nugteren 2011: 434) and the Late Kitan [虎斯] ~ [虎思] **xus* ‘strong, powerful (有力)’ (Shimunek 2007: 102). The sound change from **č* to *s*, as in the Kitan **xus*, appears to be irregular and isolated.¹⁷ Therefore, it cannot be excluded that both the Old Turkic and Kitan forms were borrowed from a third Para-Mongolic form.

5. Conclusion

The above discussion demonstrates that only a few Mongolic loanwords in Old Turkic can be identified with certainty. The Early Old Uyghur *nairag* ‘secondary beauty feature of a Buddha’ is definitely a loanword, whereas the Old Turkic *balbal* ‘stone pillar’, *čakır* ‘blue’ and *kösün* ‘strength, power, authority’ remain only as possibilities. Another lexical item that can be added to the above is the Old Turkic *us-* ‘to be thirsty’, which is, in my opinion, a borrowing from the Pre-Proto-Mongolic **u+s-*, derived from the noun **u* ‘water’. The latter is attested as **u* ‘id.’ in Kitan and as **u.sun* ‘id.’ in Common Mongolic. The denominal verbal suffix *+(A)s-* was still productive in Proto-Mongolic, Middle Mongol and thus probably in Pre-Proto-Mongolic. The Pre-Proto-Mongolic verb **u+s-* was not preserved in Proto-Mongolic and was replaced by the longer **umdaas-* ‘to be thirsty’, derived from **umdaan* ‘drink, beverage’.

¹⁶ It has long been assumed by Turkologists that the Proto-Turkic word-final short vowels were elided very early in Common Turkic. Relics of these vowels are found in the older Turkic loanwords in Mongolic and Samoyedic, as well as sporadically in Chuvash and the Khotan dialect of Uyghur (Johanson 2021: 350–351; Röna-Tas 2022: 64–65). In addition, some loanwords such as CT *tōn* ‘garment, clothing’ (Clauson 1972: 512–513), borrowed from the Khotan Saka *thauna-* ‘cloth; silk’ or the Tocharian B *tono* ‘silk’, similarly suggest a prehistoric apocope.

¹⁷ The only other example I could find is the Late Kitan **t^hawuys/*t^hawis* ‘dirt, soil’ (Shimunek 2017: 375), which is related to the Tabgač **toyočim* ‘soil, dust’ (Vovin 2007: 193) rather than to CM **toasun* ‘dust’ (Nugteren 2011: 521). The author (Ünal 2019: 517) has also connected the Kitan [拜洗] **pays-* ‘to receive favours/gifts (受賜)’ with the Mongolic **hačil/*hačig* ‘favour, benefit’ (Sun 1990: 125).

Abbreviations

CM	Common Mongolic	mss.	manuscripts
CT	Common Turkic	OT	Old Turkic
DLT	Diwān Luyāt at-Turk (1072–1074 CE)	PBT	Proto-Bulgar Turkic
EMT	Early Middle Turkic	pl.	plural
fn.	footnote	PT	Proto-Turkic
MM	Middle Mongol	QA	Qısaş al-Anbiyā' (1310–1311 CE)
Mo.	Mongolic	WM	Written Mongol

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