

## ON SOME ORIENTAL ELEMENTS IN OLD NOVGORODIAN AND OTHER OLD RUSSIAN DIALECTS

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The author is aiming to interpret the historical connection between Old Russian *kamka* and Old Novgorodian *хамъ* ‘textile of silk damask’. She comes to the conclusion that the former is a borrowing from East Old Turkic *qamqī*, while the latter is a loan from West Old Turkic *χamī*. Both Old Turkic words are of Chinese origin.

*Key words:* Turkic–Russian language contact, Volga Bulgarian, West Old Turkic loanwords in Russian, Wanderwords of Oriental origin.

The focus of the present paper is on the word meaning ‘silky Chinese textile; variegated woven linen; damask’, which has been known in a variety of forms in East Old Turkic and Old Russian sources since the 12th century onward, as well as in modern Turkish and its regional dialects, while its derived forms can be traced in regional dialects of Russian. This word is found in Russian, designating an expensive trade item brought from far away, having been borrowed into Old Russian from Old Turkic, where, however, it was an earlier borrowing from the Orient. It is enough to call back the history of the Russian words *žemčug* ‘mother-of-pearl’ (cf. Dobrodomov 1966, pp. 57–64; Menges 1970, pp. 94–100; Róna-Tas–Berta 2011, pp. 402–404) or *kniga* ‘book’ (cf. Kniezsa 1955, p. 872; Dobrodomov 1971; Komoróczy 1976, pp. 28–29; Trubačev 1987, pp. 203–204; Agyagási 1994; Róna-Tas–Berta 2011, pp. 590–593).<sup>1</sup> However, while in these examples the source dialect of Old Turkic can be identified with reasonable certainty only as Bulgar Turkic (or, using a more modern designation,

<sup>1</sup> For the history of research regarding Oriental elements of the Russian lexicon until 1970, see Dobrodomov–Romanova (1970), for the words of Turkic origin from later on, see Dobrodomov (1976; 1985); Šipova (1976); Vásáry (2013; 2016); Agyagási (2015).

the Ogur dialect of West Old Turkic), in the case of the word under investigation I want to argue for multiple sources of the Russian variants of the word.

The history of the Russian word *kamka* was first mentioned by Ogienko (1915/2015, p. 29) in the Russian literature on lexicology, who lists it together with words that, according to him, were borrowed into Russian from Persian at various times, but he does so without providing the Persian form in question. Šipova (1976, pp. 156–156) discusses the historic occurrences of the Russian word *kamka*, specifically detailing those from the 18th century, quoting Ogienko's opinion about the Persian origin of the word, but without expressing her individual stance regarding the details of the borrowing process. The second, Russian language edition of Vasmer's dictionary (Fasmer 1986/2, pp. 174–175) states that the source of the Russian word could be any of the known Turkic languages, where the word can be regarded to be of Chinese origin. But he does not provide the original Chinese source of the word.

The geographical distribution of the forms meaning 'damask' and the etymologically likely related variant forms were analysed in earlier Orientalist research.<sup>2</sup> The earliest occurrence of the word is in Arabic language sources: Ḥurdādbih (8th century) *kimḥā* 'soie damassée'; Balādurī (892) *kimḥāw* 'soie damassée'; Ṭabarī (10th century) *kamḥāna* 'pannus sericus' (cf. Doerfer 1967, p. 603). After a hiatus of a few centuries, it occurs in Persian: *kimḥā* (1401) 'Brokat der Arten Nasīg' (Doerfer 1967, p. 603). In the correspondence of the emperors of the Ming dynasty and Timurid Šāh-ruḥ it is found in two variant Persian forms with two different meanings: *kamḥā* or *kamḥāb* 'pannus pictus unius coloris', and *kimḥā* or *kimḥāb* 'pannus pictus versicolor; silk worked with gold or silver flowers, brocaded silk, brocade, velours' (Doerfer 1967, p. 604).

Beginning with the early 14th century (following Marco Polo's journey to China), it appears in several languages of mediaeval Europe (French *camocas* and its variants, Italian *camucca*, English *camaca*, mediaeval Latin *camoca*, Spanish *camocan*, *camucan* 'textile of silk damask woven in all colours, sometimes with stripes of gold and silver, the designs mainly birds' (Pelliot 1959, pp. 145–146). It is known in Greek (καμουχάς), in the Balkan languages, in Georgian (ქანჩა 'Gewebe'; *k'amḥa* 'Art Seidengewebe'), and from the 18th century onward variants of the word also appeared in India (Hindi *kamkhvāb*, Bengali *kimkhvāb* 'gold brocade': Pelliot 1959, pp. 145–147), from where it was borrowed into Tibetan and Malay (Doerfer 1967, pp. 604–605).

As can be seen, the various variants of the word are found all over Eurasia, in a web of borrowing processes acting in various directions. All variants of the word can be traced back to two forms: *kimḥā* and *kamḥā*, and the word may or may not have a syllable-final *b* at the end. Both Pelliot (1959, p. 147) and Doerfer (1967, pp. 604–605) concluded that the ultimate source of these forms is Chinese. After a lengthy discussion, criticising and finally rejecting the results of earlier Sinologist research regarding Chinese words meaning 'damask, brocade, silk', Pelliot opts for Y. Yule's

<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to Imre Hamar and Gábor Kósa for making the Orientalist literature cited below available to me.

explanation as the most plausible. Accordingly, the forms borrowed into the various languages of the Eurasian region are closest to the Chinese expression *chin-hua* (\**kjəm-χ<sup>w</sup>a*) ‘gold flower’, which had gone through a series of semantic changes since the 9th century. The word became the designation of valance in Southern China, where Arabic and Persian merchants became familiar with it. Following its Chinese pronounced form, they probably wrote it down as *kīmḥāw* (Pelliot 1959, pp. 149–150). However, the Cantonese pronunciation of the first part of the compound was *kam* (Pelliot 1959, p. 148), which form must have found its way to the west through other merchants. This would explain the two parallel phonetic variants of the word in the languages of Eurasia.

Both researchers attempted to provide a detailed explanation for the historical relationship of the forms occurring in many languages of the enormous Eurasian region. They agreed that the main mediatory language was Persian, which could have transmitted both phonetic variants. They also agreed that the word was borrowed into Turkic and Slavic languages via Persian, but Pelliot also provides a detailed train of thought as an explanation: in his opinion, borrowing via Persian had to be posited because there was not a single Old Turkic source, beginning with Kāšyari through Uyğur to the Mongol Period, which historically documented the result of the direct borrowing from Chinese into Turkic and from Turkic into Slavic.

At this juncture, I would like to return to the original train of thought of Pelliot’s paper to specify Pelliot’s stance, since after his work had been published, an East Old Turkic written source using Uyğur writing (from the 12th–14th centuries) was found in which the word in question occurred. It was first published in the *Drevnetjurkskij slovar’*, ten years after Pelliot’s work. Also, the Old Novgorodian birch bark charter has become widely known only recently, which contains the investigated word dating from the 14th century and can be directly connected with the Old Turkic variant. The data are as follows:

#### Turkic data:

East Old Turkic (12th–14th centuries) *qamqı* ‘kamka, šelkovaja materija’ (DTS p. 416); Sağay *kamği* ‘kamka, kitajskaja šelkovaja materija’ (Radlov 1893–1911, II, p. 490); Alt., Tel., Kir. *kamka* ‘id.’ (Radlov ibid.); Kirg. *kamka* ‘kitajskij šelk’ (Iudahin 1965); Crimean Tatar *kimxa* ‘damast, šelkovaja materija’ (Radlov II, p. 1405); Kazan Tat. *kamka* (ust.) ‘kamka’ (TatRS 1966, p. 219); Bashk. *qamqa* ‘raznovidnost’ kitajskogo šelka’ (Uraksin 1996, p. 344); Turkish *kemha* ‘rod šelkovoju tkani’ (TRS 1977, p. 531).

#### Slavic data:

Old Novgorodian (cca. 1310–1330) *хамъ* ‘polotno’ (Zaliznjak 2004, p. 541); Old Russian (1486) *КАМКА* ‘šelkovaja cvetnaja tkan’ s uzorami’ (Sreznevskij 1989, I, pp. 1186–1187); (15th–16th century ~ 1472) *КАМКА* ‘šelkovaja cvetnaja uzorčataja tkan’ (Filin 1980, p. 48); Russian dial. *хамовник* (star.) ‘tkač, polotnjanščik, skatertnik’; *хамовное (дело)* ‘tkackoe, polotnjanoje i branoe’ (Daľ 1881/1989 Vol. IV, p. 542)

Polish (15th–17th centuries) *kamcha* ‘nazwa drogiej materji, adamaszku’ (Brückner 1957, p. 215); bolg. *kámúha* ‘edinstroj koprinjana tkan’ (Gerov 1976, p. 344).

The East Old Turkic word *qamqī* can be the directly borrowed variant of the Chinese *chin* (\**k̡iəm-χ<sup>w</sup>a*) (pronounced in the Cantonese way) plus *ch’i* (\**k’jie*)<sup>3</sup> combined as a compound, with the meaning ‘brocade’. This word, however, was borrowed directly not only into East Old Turkic but also into West Old Turkic. Although the latter is not documented in early written sources, the speakers of this variety of Old Turkic got into direct contact with several communities speaking a wide range of other languages between the 5th century and the Mongol invasion of Europe. The lexical items borrowed from these languages were mostly retained in the languages of the communities they were in contact with. The most detailed source of early West Old Turkic is the group of Old Turkic loanwords in the Hungarian language, recently treated by Róna-Tas and Berta (2011) in detail. Volga Bulgars achieved a prominent role among the speakers of West Old Turkic varieties. From the 10th century onward they controlled the east–west river trade, soon founded their empire, and traded with various peoples themselves, among them the merchants of the Old Novgorodian city state.<sup>4</sup> However, since in Chuvash, the language of the only direct descendants of the Volga Bulgars still living today, this word has not been preserved, the West Old Turkic equivalent of East Old Turkic *qamqī* should be sought in the lexicon of the Old Novgorodian dialect.

In the West Old Turkic equivalent of the 12th–13th-century East Old Turkic form *qamqī* a *q-* > *χ-* change must have taken place, since this change started already in the 7th century (for details, see Róna-Tas–Berta 2011, pp. 1100–1101). The *q* of the second syllable, however, became voiced and soon underwent spirantisation (*q* > *ḡ* > *γ*), and finally it was dropped (*γ* > *Ø*). The first part of the process (i.e. the secondary voicing of the non-first syllable *-q*) is traceable in one Volga Bulgarian loanword in Old Russian: Volga Bulgarian *buraq* ‘beer’ > \**buraḡ* > *buray* → Old Russian *бѣрага* ‘id.’, cf. East Old Turkic *boza* ‘a kind of beer’ (Agyagási 2010). The deletion of the voiced spirant is exemplified by an early West Old Turkic loanword in Hungarian: West Old Turkic \**bergü* > \**berγü* > \**berü* → Ancient Hungarian *bērü* (> Hung. *bér* ‘wage, rent’), cf. East Old Turkic *bergü* ‘something which ought to be given, gift, tax’ (Róna-Tas–Berta 2011, pp. 115–118).

The word-final *-i* of the form *qamqī* could not be preserved when borrowed into Russian for morphological reasons: after having been borrowed, the Turkic word had to fit one of the Old Russian noun classes. However, the Old Russian noun declension system did not have a class for hard *i*-stems. The word occurring on the cited birch bark charter has a *-u* final genitive partitive case marker, which means that the West Old Turkic/Volga Bulgarian variant was adopted by the speakers of the Old

<sup>3</sup> In earlier literature, Philips mentioned the existence of such a lexical structure in Chinese (cf. Pelliot 1959, p. 148).

<sup>4</sup> Contacts between Volga Bulgarians and Old Novgorodians were also mentioned often-times in the 1st Novgorodian Annals.

Novgorodian dialect as a masculine \*-ŭ stem, monosyllabic, Class IV noun. Considering all this, the history of the borrowing of the West Old Turkic (Volga Bulgarian) word can be reconstructed as follows:

West Old Turkic \**qamqī* ‘silk damask’ > \**χamgī* > \**χamyī* > \**χamī* → Old Novgorodian *χamъ* ‘damask’.

The Old Novgorodian noun, however, did not remain isolated: this Russified stem served as a base for the word *xamovnik* ‘weaver’, a *nomen agentis* derived with the Russian *ov+nik* denominal complex suffix, and the adjectival equivalent of the word was also created by attaching the *-ov* possessive adjectival derivational suffix to the stem.

The variants with the phonological form *kamka*, attested in other Old Russian dialects from the 15th century onward, were borrowed into Russian either from East Old Turkic or from Persian. If the word is regarded as a later borrowing from the East Old Turkic *qamqī*, the word-final *-ī* was replaced by the feminine *-a* ending, again for morphological reasons. However, if the Persian form *kamḥā* was the source of the Russian word, a replacement of *-h* with *-k* in the second syllable has to be posited.

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