

An Ancient East Asian Wanderwort

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ABSTRACT

The previously non-discussed ancient east Asian Wanderwort *araj~aran* ‘interjection; barely, suddenly’ is discussed and presented in great detail, and traced throughout many languages phonologically and semantically. The root has also undergone local secondary semantic developments in places, meanings which have then been borrowed into neighboring languages, some already carrying the same root, some borrowing only the new semantic meaning. After detailed lexical documentation of this root in various languages, a possible semantic map is presented at the end of the study. Language groups and languages involved in this very geographically spread out *Wanderwort* are the Turkic, Tungusic, Mongolic and Yukaghir languages, as well as Tocharian B, Sel’kup, Kamass, Kott, Russian, Japanese and Iñupiatun.

KEYWORDS

Tocharian B, Tungusic, Turkic, Mongolic, Yukaghir, Sel’kup, Kamass, Kott, Russian, Japanese, Iñupiatun, semantic borrowing, Wanderwort

1. INTRODUCTION

A *Wanderwort* is, per the simplest definition, a word that has spread as a lexical borrowing throughout many languages, often languages very far away from each other, and in connection with trade. The definition given elsewhere (Campbell & Mixco 2007: 220) defines a *Wanderwort* as a. a borrowed word diffused across numerous languages, b. usually within a wide geographical distribution, and c. typically it is impossible to determine the original donor language from which the loanword in other languages originated. Much has been written about *Wanderwörter*, but far from all details are understood; a fairly comprehensive and recent overview can be found elsewhere (Haynie, Bown, Epps, Hill & McConvell 2014). The most well-known *Wanderwörter* are for words denoting *copper*, *silver* (Antonov & Jacques 2011), *ginger*, *sugar*, *cumin*, *wine* and *mint*, some of which were circulated already during the Bronze Age trade. A few later *Wanderwörter* are words for *tea* and *orange*, and many more. In eastern Asia, the area focus of this paper, many of these trade goods words are indeed wandering words, *Wanderwörter*.¹

In my previous research, I have suggested other Asian *Wanderwörter*: one denoting ‘mouth; to open’ (like **aŋa*) and another denoting ‘navel’ (like **kin*/**kün*~**kil*-/**kul*~**küpi*, perhaps all originally Proto-Nivkh **khəlm̩*) (Piiapanen 2018: 375–378). In this paper, I will present yet another Asian *Wanderwort*, the root **araj*~**aran*, with both primary and secondary semantics (basic meanings: an *interjection*, *barely*, *suddenly*), and below is found a careful step-by-step presentation. It is difficult to determine exactly what constitutes a *Wanderwort* even by the definition, but a number of further suggestions will no doubt be presented in the future.

This *Wanderwort* – an interjection, also functioning as an adverb – also brings a new etymological suggestion to one word in Tocharian B. The same word is also found spread out extensively in Turkic, Mongolic, Tungusic, Yukaghir, Yup’ik Eskimo and beyond (in Sel’kup and Kott among other languages), and it has thus far been generally believed that all known forms hail originally through borrowings from Mongolic. However, as the word is also encountered in Tocharian B, attested earlier than any form of Mongolic, as well as possibly even in Yup’ik Eskimo, and Japanese, the etymologies and lexical chains of borrowings – as well as semantic changes of this word in different groups of languages – may require some major clarification and rethinking. This paper is a start in connecting the dots, but future research remains to clarify all the chronological details. This root has never been considered a *Wanderwort* before, but with the mapping presented in this paper it should be so. I am well aware that Turkic borrowings in Tocharian B – not to mention the possibility of Tungusic borrowings – have not yet been accepted fully in Tocharology, and realize therefore that the etymology presented in this paper may meet equal skepticism. Nevertheless, a case for borrowing can be made for it, as the word may only make sense from a *synsemantic* viewpoint, and I hope that the argumentation will be regarded sound and clear.

The root discussed in this paper appears to be geographically very widely spread out, lexically extensively borrowed, and involving a few parallel meanings, some of which seem semantically unrelated. However, we are here dealing with only one root, on occasion featuring a local suffix, and evident with several secondary semantic developments. The semantics seem to have ‘colored’

¹ Alexander Savelyev, Juho Pystynen, Mikhail Zhivlov, Christopher Miller, Guillaume Jacques, Alexander Vovin, John Kupchik, Huisu Yun, Eero Talvitie, José Andrés Alonso de la Fuente, Arnaud Fournet and two anonymous reviewers are gratefully acknowledged for their valuable input much improving the details of my argumentation during the manuscript preparation.



the meanings of surrounding languages as well carrying this root, through semantic borrowing, which gives us a hint at where every semantic change must have originated. However, as an anonymous reviewer points out, this hypothesis would be a very hard thing to check and verify or falsify. In any case, the root is very ancient and found in numerous forms in different languages – one of those *Wanderwörter* which seem to be found nearly everywhere one looks – and must be considered an Asian *Wanderwort*.

As to the feasibility of interjections being borrowed, some research does suggest that this is indeed a lexical category open to transfer from one language to another (Boček 2015: 104). According to Matras (2009: 159), where 27 different contact languages were studied as to a frequency-based hierarchy of borrowings, the following was found to apply: nouns > conjunctions > verbs > discourse markers > adjectives > interjections > adverbs > other particles, adpositions > numerals > pronouns > derivational affixes > inflectional affixes. This hierarchy is also confirmed by studies of borrowings into, for example American Hungarian (Vázsonyi 1995) and American Finnish (Virtaranta 1992). This all suggests that the borrowing of interjections is actually more common even than the borrowing of numerals, which certainly are known to have occurred fairly commonly in various Asiatic languages. Further, interjections are believed to be borrowed via alternating code-switching, a quite productive borrowing route (Muysken 2000), which goes particularly well in hand with the commonly multilingual milieu of Eastern Asia. Still, that interjections would be borrowed as *Wanderwörter* is more unexpected, but may in this case have occurred more readily because this root also has parallel and very useful adverbial meanings. As an anonymous reviewer pointed out, an actual interjective *Wanderwort* parallel is to be found with *haide* ‘let’s go; come on’ found in Ottoman Turkish, Albanian, Serbo-Croatian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Western Armenian, etc. With these matters in mind, I will here present an ancient borrowed interjection functioning as a *Wanderwort*.

2. SUDDEN SURPRISES IN THE ASIAN LANDS (TURKIC, TUNGUSIC, MONGOLIC, RUSSIAN, YUKAGHIR, ESKIMO, ETC.)

Let us trace the root, first from Mongolic, and then into other languages and language groups. Both borrowings and back-borrowings can be noted, and often the semantics, specifically, in different languages will indicate from where it should have been borrowed. In the presentation, I will make excursions into different languages, make comparisons of relevance, cite lexical data, all in order to attempt to trace and document this *Wanderwort* in as great detail as possible. Many of the cited forms have not been discussed before in literature, and this therewith provides a loanword etymology for this root in a few languages.

Mongolic (**araj* ‘barely’): Middle Mongolian *araj* ‘едва = barely’ (Haenisch 1939); Written Mongolian *araj* ‘barely, scarcely, hardly; with difficulty’ (Lessing 1960: 48), as well as the derivatives: *araikizu* ‘barely, with difficulty’, *araixan* ‘just a little too...; not quite; hardly, barely; with difficulty’; Buryat *araj* ‘едва, еле, с трудом, кое-как, почти, чуть, несколько, немного, пожалуй, разве что = barely, hardly, with difficulties, somehow, nearly, a little bit, some, a little, perhaps, except that’, as well as derivative: *arajxan* ‘едва, лишь, еле; чуть-чуть; всего-навсего, только = barely; a little bit; only, just’ (Čeremisov 1951: 60), Khalkha *arai* ‘rather, somewhat, a (little) bit’; Kalmuck *arā* ‘kaum; beinahe; ein wenig = barely; nearly; a little’ (Ramstedt 1935: 13), Ordos *arā*; Dagur *araa* ‘Аналог на русском языке Oh; Ой; выражать эмоционально в зависимости от характера восклицательной



интонации: признание, отзыв, догадки и т. д. = analogue to Russian (exclamation) oh! oj!; emotional expression depending on the nature of the intonation of the exclamation: recognition, recall guesswork, etc.; *araa-araa* ‘восклициание, когда человек отказывается принять подарок = exclamation when a person refuses to accept a gift; *arān* ‘едва, с трудом, еле, кое-как; только что; очень мало, чуть-чуть, всего-навсего = hardly, with difficulty, somehow; just; very little, only’ (Todayeva 1986: 121; Tsybenov & Tumurdej 2014: 16); Sary-Yughur *arān*, Monguor *araŋ* ‘pour rien, gratis, sans motif, inutile, vain, en vain’ (de Smedt & Mostaert 1933: 11);² Moghol *arei* ‘so it is, is that so?’ (Iwamura 1961: 27–7b). In particular the Dagur form is interesting, as there the root also functions as an exclamation just like in Tungusic (see below).

A Mongolic source should be posited for many forms borrowed into minor, isolated languages, and as previously known in literature, albeit through Turkic proxy languages, such as into the Sel’kup and Kott languages: Mongolic > Turkic > Samoyed Sel’kup *arei* ‘едва, еле-еле = scarcely, barely’, as well as Kamass *āryj* ‘wenig, sehr wenig’ (Donner) ~ *ārej* ‘mit Mühe, kaum’ (Castrén 1854: collects 870 Kamass words)(as J. Pystynen pointed out for me), believed borrowed from a Turkic source (Joki 1953) & Turkic > Yenisey Kott *arai* ‘hardly, with difficulty; with’ (Joki 1953: 73; Werner 2002: 57), also believed to be borrowed from a Turkic source (Khabtagaeva 2015: 114). The Mongolic forms are also mentioned in the Secret History, the Alexander (Dūj’l-qarnayn) manuscript, Dagur and Mongghul, and are therefore exceptionally well-attested although for an unknown reason missing altogether from Nugteren’s recent and otherwise excellent reconstruction of Mongolic (Nugteren 2011).

Having started with the attestation in the Mongolic languages, we now extend our comparison to the Turkic languages. The Mongolic root for ‘barely’ appears to be the origin of an early borrowing into the Siberian Turkic languages as well. Mongolic > Turkic (**araj* ‘barely’): Yakut *arj̄j-ari:y* ‘едва, чуть-чуть = barely; a little bit’ (TMS 1 48), *araj~raj* ‘вот; вдруг; едва; хотя, разве = here; suddenly; barely; although, perhaps, *aryčy* ‘just; hardly, with difficulty’ (JRS 44; Pekarsky 1959: 129, 130; 2001), also, most interestingly, interjective uses with *arax* ‘выражает боязнь, страх = interjection that expresses fear: ay! oy!’, *arax-arax* ‘ой-ой, боюсь! = оу-оу! I’m afraid!’ (JRS 45); Dolgan *aray~agaj* ‘only, merely; intensifying particle’ (Stachowski 1993: 28, 36); Siberian Tatar *aray* ‘slow, thoughtful, gentle, with difficulty, hardly’; Khakas *aray* ‘медленно, тихо; с трудом; едва = slow, quiet; with difficulties; barely’ (Subrakovoj 2006: 70); Tuvan *aray* ‘слегка; чуть-чуть, немножко = slightly; a little bit’; Tofalar *aray* ‘едва, еле-еле; кое-как, с трудом = scarcely, barely; somehow, with difficulty’ (Rassadin 1971: 154; herein believed a Mongol borrowing); Kyrgyz *araŋ* ‘эле-эле, едва-едва; насилу = barely; hardly’ (Judaxin 1985: 64); Oyrat *araj* (ЭСТЯ 1, 167–168, several of the comparisons made here are also presented therein, where, again, a Mongolic origin is assumed).

Browsing the literature, it seems generally believed that this root is only found in the Siberian Turkic languages, but this is actually a false belief as the root is much more widely spread out that that even on the Turkic side. Therefore, I note that the following can also be added to the comparisons on the Turkic side (**araj* ‘barely’): Uzbek (Karluk Turkic) *araŋ* ‘barely, hardly’; Kazakh (Kipchak Turkic) *araj* ‘тихо; тише (возглас, которым останавливают овец, коз и т. д.); выдержка; самообладание; спокойствие; заря = quiet; to hush up (an exclamation to quiet sheep, goat, etc.); excerpt; composure; calm; dawn, as well as Kazakh *ären* ‘hardly, barely’, which

² The authors compared the Monguor word with Tibetan *ran* ‘spontaneously, of one’s accord’, but given the overall thesis presented in this paper, the similarity is likely only coincidental.



should be a separate later borrowing due to phonological reasons. The Kazakh word *araj* ‘dawn’ – which as to the best of my knowledge thus far has had no known etymology – can be traced to a secondary semantic development from the primary meaning of ‘quiet, calm’; this semantic shift is not as large as one might think as it is also found realized in some other languages.³ Additionally, I note that the root is even found, unchanged, in Chuvash (Oghur Turkic): Chuvash *aran* ‘эле-эле, едва; кое-как; с трудом, насилиу = barely; somehow; with difficulty, hardly’, and derivative: *aranşă* ‘чуть-чуть, немного, малость = just a little, little’ (Andreev et al. 1985), which have many of the meanings found in different languages having this root. This form is also borrowed because it does not exhibit the expected internal phonological changes found in Chuvash vocabulary inherited from ancient Turkic; the borrowing should be from either a Turkic or Mongolic source. I suggest that Chuvash *aran* may have been borrowed from the early Mongolic form that produced Written Mongolian *araxan* ‘with difficulty’. This same etymology was also suggested earlier for the Chuvash words in the etymological dictionary of Fedotov (1996: 55–56). However, this is not necessarily so because the Turkic forms presented in this subsection can practically all be represented by the reconstructed form ***aran** ‘barely’.

Interestingly, Chuvash also has *ara* ‘разве, неужели, ли, уж, ведь; да, так; же, пусть = perhaps, really, whether, already, after all; yes, so; same, verb meaning consent, order or obligation’ (Andreev et al. 1985), which has some meanings identical to Yakut *araj* (above), but it does, in fact, (as suggested to me by A. Savelyev) belong with unrelated Proto-Turkic ***ede** > Shor *eze* ‘yes, o.k.’, etc. (the Proto-Turkic variant ***ide** is reflected in most other Turkic languages as per the SIGTJa 2006: 33 & ***ide** ~ ***ede** in the EDAL 1130).

Practically all of these forms could perhaps have originated in Mongolic, after practically having taken on the function of a *Wanderwort*. The presence of this root in the Karluk, Kipchak and Oghur Turkic languages has to the best of my knowledge, not been observed before, making it necessary to analyze the situation anew. The general belief held in the literature on the subject that the Mongolic forms have been borrowed only into the Siberian Turkic languages is thus demonstrably not right. This may suggest that the history of this root is vastly different than previously believed, and we could tentatively be dealing with another Proto-Turkic root although this option seems very unlikely (more on this below). It is noteworthy that, from the Turkic forms, we have a few borrowings, and even a (re)borrowing back into Mongolic. Turkic > Mongolic, a late re-borrowing: Dial. Оурат *ärä* ‘едва, еле, кое-как, чуть, почти, немного = barely, hardly, somehow, a little bit, nearly, a little’, believed borrowed from a Turkic source (Ramstedt 1957: 182–183).

Next we tackle the Tungusic languages. The TMS (in TMS 1 48) suggests that the Mongolic forms of ‘barely’ are also the origin of many Tungusic forms. This is an agreeable suggestion as should be demonstrated by the examples below. The following applies: Mongolic > Tungusic (TMS 1 48): Ewenki *ara* ‘ой!; вот, например = interjection: oh!; here, for example’, *aran* ‘едва, чуть; как только; вдруг = barely, a little bit; as soon as; suddenly’, and the derivatives *arama* ‘эле-эле, едва-едва; медленно = barely; slowly’, *arakuukaan* ‘slowly; a little bit’, *aramakaan* ~ *arakuŋza* ‘to delay; to be slow; to hesitate’, *arakuun* ‘gradually’, *arbüükun* ‘shallow’, *arba* ‘low standing water’, *arbakta* (Vasilevič 1958: 34; ЭСТЯ 1 93–94) (supposedly borrowed from Mongo-

³ Consider, for example, *The Garden of Morning Calm* (Korean 아침고요수목원), an arboretum at the east of Seoul, supposedly after Korea being nicknamed the *country of morning calm*. In fact, both *morning* and *night* (as in ‘calm of the night’) are often considered the most peaceful, calm and still times of the entire day (further exemplified by numerous song lyrics).



lic as per TMS 1 48); Ewen *araj~arai* ‘ой!; ну; вдруг; почти; оказывается = interjection: oh!; well; suddenly, abruptly; nearly, only; apparently’, *arən* ‘едва = barely’, and further derivatives (Robbek & Robbek 2005: 45), and the derivative *arantaa* ‘by the way, in passing’ (ЭСТЯ 1 93–94). Orok *araa* ‘о-о! оказывается! = interjection: oh-oh!’. Solon *arā gunexee ~ aranti* ‘едва = barely’. Ulchi *ara-ra* ‘ой-ой! больно! = interjection: oh-oh!’. Spoken Manchu *ara* ‘ай! ох!; ей! гей! (при удивлении) = interjection: oh-oh!; interjection: ej-ej (at surprise)’ (Zaxarov 1875: 53), *are* ‘ох! ой! (при невыносимой боли) = interjection: oh! oj! (at unbearable pain)’ (Zaxarov 1875: 54), *arake~arke* ‘ох! увы! = interjection: oh! Alas!’ (Zaxarov 1875: 53), *arkan* ‘едва, еле-еле = scarcely, barely’, *arəqən* (2952) ‘scarcely’, and other derivatives. Literary Manchu has *arqan* ‘scarcely’. The clearly suffixed Manchu forms deserve further comment. I believe these originated through borrowing from the early derivative form that led to Written Mongolian *araixan* ‘just a little too...; not quite; hardly, barely’ (possibly < ***arai-qan** ‘barely’). The Tungusic meaning of ‘apparently’ surprisingly matches up with the Moghol meaning of ‘so it is, is that so?’, but this may suggest that these are secondary semantic changes having occurred independently in this language group and language, respectively. In any case, the exact semantic meaning of the geographically very distant Moghol form – which parallels that found in Ewen and Yakut – suggests that all of the various forms in Turkic, Tungusic, Mongolic and Yukaghir are indeed connected, in a few cases through unclear secondary and tertiary semantic development.

Indeed, a Mongolic origin is, again, a possible hypothesis, but only the Northern Tungusic forms (***aran** > Ewen, Ewenki, Solon), have the meaning of ‘barely’ – perhaps surprisingly also found as Chuvash *aran* ‘barely’, and similarly in other Turkic languages! (as well as the “new” meaning of ‘suddenly’), while every language, including the South Tungusic ones (***ara(j)** > Ulchi, Manchu, Orok), also has the meaning of an interjection. This interjective use is paralleled by that found in neighboring Dagur, and it therefore there reflects either an ancient Mongolic function (lost or non-documented in the other Mongolic languages) or a local Tungusic function (having reached Dagur through semantic borrowing). It is unclear how the Turkic form ***aranj** ‘barely’ fits into this, but this could, alternatively, be the lexical source both into Tungusic and Mongolic, instead of the other way around. In the Dolgan representative of this root, the meaning functions as an *intensifying particle*, which seems to have arisen from the Yakut form ‘apparently’. Additionally, Manchu also has the meaning of ‘barely’ and I believe this has resulted from a direct Mongolic semantic borrowing. Then, the Mongolic form has also seemingly been borrowed into the North Tungusic languages of Ewen and Ewenki (with dialects). The original meaning of an interjection, however, is retained in all Tungusic languages that have this root, and the meaning has also further reached Yakut with *arax* (see above).

As to this Tungusic interjective use, I believe this root is also found borrowed as an interjection from Tungusic into Chuvan (all the materials being attested only in the 18th-19th centuries), and therefrom subsequently borrowed into dialectal Russian around the Kolyma River (as per Anikin 2000: 75): dial. Rus. *agaj! agaj!* ‘старинный охотничий клич, усвоенный русскими, должно быть, от чуванцем = ancient hunting cry, learned by the Russians, must be from the Chuvan’. Chuvan is another now extinct Yukaghir language in the very far northeastern Siberia, and this interjection was according to Anikin first documented by Bogoras in 1926 (and presented in Bogoras 1928: 24). We can posit a similar phonological change for this expressive root as borrowed into Chuvan as with Dolgan *aray* > *agaj* (per above), as the languages in that area are not particularly comfortable with the /r/-sound. We can infer from Bogoras’ description that the word *agaj*, as an interjection, also existed in Chuvan. An interjection exactly of this type in Chuvan



(and dial. Russian) can only be the result of a Tungusic borrowing! But that is not all, as the root astonishingly seems to be found also in the very distantly located Eskimo language of Iñupiatun *araa~araavai* ‘interjection: too much!, or expression of anger or disgust’?> *araaq-* ‘to be excessive (too loud, too talkative, etc.)’ (Seiler 2012: 49)⁴; do note the interjective use here. It must also be kept in mind (as was informed me by J.A. Alonso de la Fuente) that the Iñupiatun *r* really stands for the sound of a retroflex fricative *ʀ*. An *expression of anger*, like in Iñupiatun, is semantically fully comparable to the use of this root as an *ancient hunting cry* by the neighboring Chuvan and Russian populations. I believe that the Chuvan, Iñupiatun and dialectal Russian forms could be early Tungusic borrowings, although speaking against this, at least in the case of Iñupiatun, is the presence of similar words also in other Eskimo languages. In addition, as kindly pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, it must be noted that such hunting cries are something not easily borrowed from another language by people performing a specific type of hunting already since thousands of years. In other words, the Iñupiatun word may be entirely unrelated to the *Wanderwort* at hand. This may suggest that all such forms in the Eskimo languages are in fact only onomatopoeic in nature and not borrowings. Here I will also mention Yakut *arān albas*, a folkloric expression meaning ‘various tricks’ (Nelunov 2002: 106), where I suspect the first part may be another Tungusic borrowing of this root. While Yakut *albas* (?< *alba-č) in itself means ‘cunning; trick’ (JRS 37), I suggest that the expression, probably describing a protagonist in a flattering manner, may literally mean ‘surprise trick’ or ‘sudden trick’, with the interpretation of ‘spontaneous trick for every occasion’ (as per a ‘bag of tricks’), or ‘extreme trickery’, instead of ‘barely a trick’.

The meaning of ‘suddenly’, I surmise, must have arisen secondarily from the primary function of the *interjective* form in all languages. The *interjection* is used, for example, with *sudden* surprise or fear. For example, to startle (and uttering ‘oh!’) means to frighten *suddenly*. Thus, the secondary meaning of ‘suddenly’ likely first arose in the Northern Tungusic languages, and was semantically borrowed to some of the other languages around. This is also suggested by that, according to Castrén, the word *arai* was also found in the now extinct Northern Tungusic Urulga dialect of Transbaikalia (which, as I have understood it, became extinct due to a wholesale language change into Buryat, but which now therefore still has northern Tungusic traces in it), and there had the additional meaning of ‘fast’, practically synonymous with ‘sudden’, as well as the default ‘hardly, only’ (mentioned in the Tungusic etymological dictionary of Doerfer 2004: 86). This meaning, ‘suddenly’, has then been further borrowed into both Yakut and the Yukaghir languages: Tungusic (Ewen) > KY *raj* ‘кстати = incidentally; on the way, by the way’ (Nikolaeva & Shalugin 2002: 66; Nikolaeva 2006: 391), believed borrowed from Ewen (this author, *forthcoming*); TK *arej* ‘suddenly’, TJ *arei* (dialectal forms of Tundra Yukaghir; borrowing noted in Nikolaeva 2006: 112) would seem separately borrowed from either Tungusic or Yakut where we also have the meaning of ‘suddenly’. These borrowings must be separate borrowings due to noteworthy phonological differences. Furthermore, I note, the Ewen meaning of ‘apparently’ seems to be borrowed in suffixed form as Yakut *araaha* ‘anašılan; galiba = apparently; probably’ (Vasiliev 1995: 12, 92), as well as, independently from Ewen, in TD *arai* ‘thus, so’ (Angere 1957: 23, his whole glossary being copied from the glossary of Jochelson [1933]).

However, the hypothesis that all of the Tungusic forms have originated in Mongolic is not readily demonstrated nor fully in evidence. The Mongolic meaning of ‘barely’ may be borrowed, but the meaning of ‘suddenly’ seems originally Tungusic, as well as the interjective function. Is

⁴ Or North Alaskan Inuit, as Seiler mainly worked with speakers of Maleniut.



there any logical semantic connection between ‘suddenly’ and ‘barely’ (other than both being adverbs) that would suggest the secondary local development of ‘barely’ > ‘suddenly’ in Tungusic after borrowing? Indeed there is (more on this below). In other words, in summary, while we cannot know the exact original words and meanings of each language, Tungusic ‘suddenly’ is likely a secondary semantic development, the meaning of which was subsequently spread out into other neighboring languages either along a lexical borrowing of this word, or as an induced semantic change affecting this word in languages that already had the word (inherited or not).

Previously, the EDAL (in EDAL 315) has attempted to connect many of these forms with Proto-Korean **ārāi* ‘formerly, some days ago, in the past’ (Nam 336) & Proto-Japanese **ārà-(ta-)* ‘new’ (JLTT 383, 677, 826), but from a semantic viewpoint these seem completely unrelated to any of the forms above; it is unclear even if the two are somehow related to each other. Additionally, the rising tone of the Proto-Korean form points to a disyllabic origin of the second syllable (as A. Vovin informs me), which definitely makes this root unrelated to the *Wanderwort* at hand. The EDAL also noted, with no details given whatsoever, that the Tungusic forms, with but a few exceptions, could hardly be borrowed from Mongolic (thus countering the suggestion given by Doerfer 1985: 44). The EDAL then agreeably notes that the Ewen and Ewenki form are likely Mongolic borrowings – probably basing this conclusion on the semantics – while the other Tungusic forms may not be Mongolic borrowings.

Curiously, there is also Yakut *āra* ‘on one’s way, under way’ (which semantically well fits the Yukaghir and Tungusic forms above), and therefrom Dolgan *āra-k-* ‘to go away’, *ārā-* ‘not to reach’ (Stachowski 1993: 41). The Yakut form is most likely borrowed from a Tungusic form. The Yakut and Dolgan forms have traditionally both been seen as connected to Proto-Turkic *(i)*ara* ‘space between; on one’s way, under way’, very well-attested throughout the Turkic languages (EDT 196, VEWT 22, TMN 2, 24, ЭТЯ 1, 162–164), but, I note, the second meaning, ‘on one’s way’, given the Proto-Turkic form is only found in Yakut (and by extension semantically shifted in Dolgan), it may therefore be more prudent to regard the Yakut form a Tungusic borrowing. As far as I can tell, there seems to be nothing indicating an original, root-initial *i- in Turkic and that could be scrapped. Thus, I suggest that the root would seem to have been merely Proto-Turkic **āra* ‘space between’ (> Turkish *ara* ‘intermediate area; interim; breather, interval’). The EDAL attempted to connect the Turkic root (EDAL 314) to Proto-Tungusic **ara-* ‘open space; open ritual court’ (TMS 1 48) and Proto-Mongolic **ar-* ‘poorly grown, thin; space, island’, both roots being extremely well-attested in their respective language groups; this connection does seem likely and it actually suggest that all of these (Turkic, Tungusic and Mongolic roots) describe a completely separate root and have nothing to do with the homonymous root handled in this paper.

3. JAPANESE SURPRISE?

Now, let’s finally turn to the Japanese islands. This root is seemingly also found in standard Japanese *あら* (*ārā*, IPA: *ar̥a*) ‘interjection: oh!; ah!; expression of emotion when you notice something or wonder’ (Matsumura 2006). Tōkyō Japanese variants include: *āra(a) ~ arā(a) ~ āre(e) ~ aré(e) ~ aree ~ ārya ~ ārara ~ ārere*. It is also used with the second vowel lengthened and as I understand it this interjection has a feminine connotation to it (as A. Vovin and others have informed me). The Japanese word is also homonymous with ‘spined perch, i.e. Nippon spinosus’, and we also have (as E. Talvitie has informed me) the homonym *āra* ‘chaff’, as well as *ara-* ‘coarse’ and *āra*



‘new’, but these must be entirely unrelated to the matter at hand. It is interesting to note that the interjective meaning is, as mentioned above, also found in the Southern Tungusic languages (reconstructed as: ***ara(j)** ‘interjection’). This suggests that the meaning of ‘interjection’ for this root is a south-eastern feature, secondarily developed in some language, and subsequently borrowed into other surrounding languages. However, one may alternatively seek an internal Japanese etymology for this word (as suggested by E. Talvitie & H. Yun) with *are* ‘that’ and *are-wa* ~ *aryaa* ~ *arya* ‘that-TOPIC’, in which case the Japanese interjection is unrelated to the *Wanderwort* at hand. Furthermore, worthy of mention, in peripheral Japonic languages there is a lexeme *ata* ~ *atta* ‘sudden’, eg. Okinawan *atta* ‘sudden’, modern Hachijō *ata* ‘sudden’, and Azumo Old Japanese dialects *ata* ‘sudden’ (as J. Kupchik has informed me), but these words are not used as interjections in this language, nor is there any evidence in support of intervocalic *r > t in Japonic, meaning all of them are also unrelated to the *Wanderwort* at hand.

If the Japanese form is part of the *Wanderwort*, however, it may suggest that the root is also found in Korean and Chinese, but I have unfortunately not been able to clearly find any such; the problem here would, of course, be that the relatively extensive historical phonological changes of both Korean and Chinese may have rendered any such root difficult to recognize and identify. As I am not a Sinologist or Koreanologist such linguistic skills are beyond me. Still, it is clear to me that a medial *-r-* in Old Chinese would no doubt have changed, or even been eliminated altogether, in modern Mandarin Chinese. If this is correct, there are, for example, Mandarin Chinese 唉 (*āi*) ‘an exclamation of surprise or pain’, 哦 (*é, ó, ò*) ‘interjection of surprise similar to: oh really?’ or 呀 (*yā*) ‘interjection of surprise’, but there seems to be no clear way to distinguish any of these from the general expressions of *pain* or *surprise* spontaneously arising in any language, or from the root discussed in this paper. The phonetics of the second and third examples actually appear to point to *ŋ-* in Middle Chinese (as informed me by A. Vovin) and so at least these are unrelated to the *Wanderwort* at hand. The first example, 唉, used to be something like **ǵə* in Old Chinese, but its reading may be contaminated with Old Chinese 矣 **ləʔ* or Old Chinese **s-rəʔ*, so there might be something there, although it would be difficult to demonstrate.

On the Korean side there actually has been a comparison in early literature (Joki 1953: 73) to Korean *ar* ~ *al* ‘nit’, although this is semasiologically questionable, although not an impossible comparison.

4. SURPRISES AND CRIES OF WOE ON THE INDO-EUROPEAN SIDE

Next we will tackle this root in Tocharian B. A brief description of Tocharian,⁵ a small group of Indo-European languages is in order. The dating of and other useful information about Tocharian B documentation can be found elsewhere (for example, Malzahn 2007; Peyrot 2008; Pinault 2008). The extinct, eastern-most branch of the Indo-European languages known as Tocharian, consisting of Tocharian A (generally East Tocharian) and Tocharian B (West Tocharian), are attested only through manuscripts from the 6th to 8th centuries AD (although according to some studies (e.g. Schmidt & Aydemir 2013, and in some works by K.T. Schmidt, etc.) Tocharian B survived

⁵ Note that throughout this paper I have opted to use the term *Tocharian* instead of *Tokharian*, which some researchers prefer. To me, the name *Tocharian* seems much more commonly used than *Tokharian*, as for example a Google search will demonstrate.



until the 12th century) found in the oasis cities of the northern edge of the Tarim Basin in Xinjiang, northwest China. Prakṛt language documents from the 3rd century AD a bit further down south (Burrow 1937) have been claimed to contain some lexical borrowings from a related language, sometimes referred to as Tocharian C (Schmidt, Zimmer), but researchers such as Adams (2019a), Pinault and Peyrot (Adams 2019b) generally dispute the existence of this separate language. All forms of Tocharian are generally believed to have become extinct after the year 840 as the Uyghurs entered the Tarim Basin as exiled out of Mongolia by the Kyrgyz. The origin of the Tocharians themselves has been discussed elsewhere (for example, Mallory 2015). In this study, we will be dealing with a fairly early *Wanderwort* as it clearly existed in Tocharian B.

From the study of lexical borrowings we have long known some of the language contacts of the earlier Tocharian populations. There are known Turkic, Chinese and East Iranian borrowings in Tocharian A & B (a selection of works follow, Turkic: Lubotsky & Starostin 2003; Witczak 2013, East Iranian: Witczak 2013; Peyrot 2018). In the other direction, there are known Tocharian borrowings in Old Chinese (Lubotsky 1998; Židek 2017). There are allegedly Tocharian or Para-Tocharian borrowings also in the Uralic languages (Napoľskikh 2001; Blažek and Schwartz 2008: 57–59). According to my count, the Tocharian B dictionary by Adams (2013), for example, contains over 110 non-etymologized Tocharian B roots (that is entries lacking etymological data), although the real number of all forms of non-etymologized Tocharian words is probably quite a lot higher than this. This paper gives an etymological suggestion as a borrowing for one of them.

With all of these extensive borrowings all over the Siberian lands – of an expressive root having as wide meanings as ‘interjection of surprise’, ‘suddenly’, ‘barely’ and ‘quiet’⁶ – we can now add another ancient representative of this root, on the Indo-European side, with Tocharian B *arai* ‘interjection: oh!; interjection that introduces vocatives = vocative particle’ (Adams 2013: 24; see also the discussion in Peyrot 2013: 369–371, which makes it clear that this interjection also existed in the form *rai* in Tocharian B, just like it does in some other languages of this study). The Tocharian word is attested through the examples of: *arai srukalyñe cisa nta kca mā prāskau... s=ārai ñi palsko cisa prāskau pon prekenne twe ñike kalatarñ apiš wārñai nreyentane* ‘O death, I fear nothing more that thee: all have to die, why would I alone fear you? ...oh, this is my idea: I am fearing because of you at all times, for you will bring me to the hells, including the Avīci!’ (THT 298a1) & *arai näkte ñäke täne yanašälle* ‘oh, how [is] to be acted here now?’ (PK-12D a6 [Thomas 1979: 13]), and has thus far been of unknown etymology. The word *arai* as an interjection in Tocharian B is also encountered in the *Tocharische Handschriften aus Turfan* (=THT) 78 b1: [*w*](e)ššam *arai*: tu kka ka ñi šaul pern(e) st(e) waike w(eskau) ‘(The Viduzaka) says, Oh!: Just this is my life and worth, to tell lie[s]...’ (transliteration by Tamai 2018). The use of this as an interjection in Tocharian B appears to convey *surprise* (or *agitation*), which is exactly like in the Tungusic languages where the root also functions as an interjection. Neither Mongolic nor Turkic has interjective uses, however, and one of these would have been the expected donor language group into Tocharian B in this case. I am still tempted to suggest that the Tocharian B word could be a Turkic borrowing, and that the use with the vocative arose secondarily, from another non-documented meaning as borrowed from Turkic (fairly likely actually given that a fair deal of lexical understanding of Tocharian B must have arisen

⁶ Although ‘interjection of surprise’ and ‘suddenly’ can be semantically related concepts, ‘quiet’ seems unrelated and may actually be another, separate root. Perhaps the latter originated in at least one of the language groups, the meaning of which was then borrowed in parallel with the former meanings to other languages. Therefore, the meaning of ‘quiet’ is not as widely spread out as the former meanings.

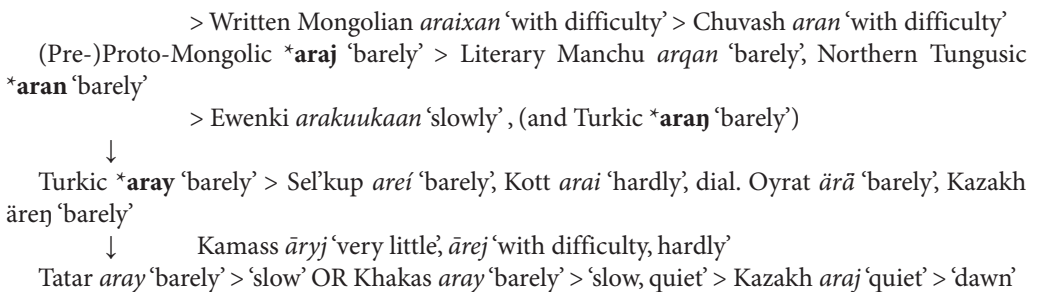


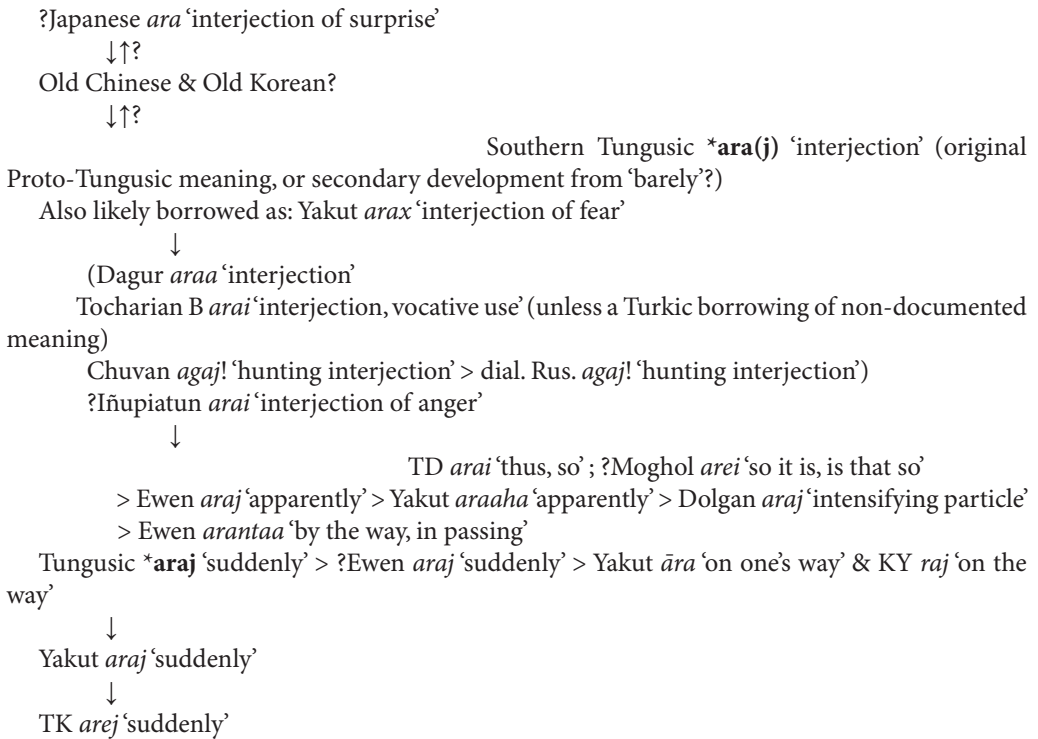
from educated guesswork and context study, a situation made even worse for non-etymologized vocabulary). Still, this is conjecture only and the evidence seems to point at an improbable Tungusic donor language into Tocharian B. The situation is not clear at all, but this is, indeed, a *Wanderwort*.

It appears remotely possible that this root may have spread even further than this. There is Sanskrit *ara* (अर) ‘little; swift, speedy’ (Monier-Williams 1899: 80), which bears a suspicious phonological and semantic similarity to the forms discussed in this paper; cmp. Buryat *araj*; Tuvan *aray*; Yakut *ari:y~araj*; Ewenki *aran*; Dial. Oyrat *ärā*, all of which also bear the meaning of ‘a little (bit)’ for this root. In parallel, the other Sanskrit meaning of ‘swift, speedy’ may be compared to Yakut *araj*; Ewenki *aran*; Ewen *araj*; TK *arej*, all of which also bear the meaning of ‘sudden’. However, given that the meaning ‘sudden’ is only found in the far northeastern Siberian area and languages, it has likely developed secondarily and locally only there (although perhaps the meaning also existed unattested in Tocharian B). The Siberian forms are therefore likely unrelated to the Sanskrit word and meaning, making the similarities purely coincidental. Besides, Sanskrit *ara* ‘little; swift, speedy’, I note, would seem to be related to the word *arare* ‘a vocative particle, expressing haste’ (Monier-Williams 1899: 81), which seems to have arisen from words such as *ari* ‘going, moving; reaching, etc.’ and *araru* ‘moving’, that is the verb for *moving, going*; all of the Sanskrit words thus seem etymologically connected to each other, but neither to the root discussed in this paper, nor to the Tocharian word despite there being known Sanskrit borrowings in Tocharian. Rather, these Sanskrit forms should be connected to Proto-Indo-European ***h₁er-** (according to G. Jacques).

5. SEMANTIC MAPPING – THE WANDERINGS OF THE ROOT

Here I will next attempt to summarize the complicated ways this root has been borrowed back and forth through many a language, and where a semantic shift has occurred. There will be two overlapping semantic trees, although the exact node of contact between the trees is not known. However, semantically it is possible (as was suggested to me by C. Miller) to have ‘barely, a little bit’ > ‘a little bit of time’ > ‘suddenly’, which would actually well connect the two semantic trees! This development has parallels in other languages as well, including English. This line of thought may also explain the odd meaning in Korean for this root, if it correctly belongs here, with: ‘a little bit’ > ‘a little bit of matter’ > ‘louse’. Likewise, the meaning of Kazakh ‘dawn’ may have arisen through: ‘just a little bit’ > ‘almost nothing; almost no sound’ > ‘quiet’ > ‘dawn’. The word thus limits *space, time, matter* or *concepts* in different ways (which would also explain how the North and South Tungusic words are connected). The assumed semantic borrowings, as presented throughout this paper, can graphically be illustrated as follows without specified chronological details:





While the scheme above is suggested by the study, there are some chronological and geographic problems with it. Further, the semantics of the words grouped together are uncontrollably far apart. Practically, Proto-Mongolic cannot be the originator of all forms in Turkic (and impossibly already in Proto-Turkic), Tungusic and beyond because it is much too recent in time. No, rather, if the Mongolic progenitor hypothesis is correct, Pre-Proto-Mongolic must have been the original source several centuries earlier (perhaps the 5th or 6th century AD at the latest, for example, to possibly have reached Tocharian B).⁷ Also, it should be evident that the Mongolic languages are the source only for some of these roots as borrowings into other languages, but some of these roots can hardly be considered to have originated in Mongolic. Thus, we are dealing with a very complex system of patchwork borrowings and re-borrowings mixed with local secondary semantic developments, which then, in a few cases, seem to have affected neighboring languages also with their meanings in a sort of semantic ‘coloring’ of roots which were already present in the neighboring languages.

Two questions of importance must also be posed. First, could a Tungusic borrowing – if we assume that the interjective function is originally Tungusic – have reached Tocharian B? Well, yes, given that Proto-Tungusic was most likely spoken in the south, close to Manchuria, it could

⁷ This thesis is viable because of course some version of Pre-Proto-Mongolic did exist at this early time. Indeed, we know that several Mongolic variants were then spoken in Mongolia, as demonstrated by the Para-Mongolic language recently uncovered and attested in the so-called Khüis Tolgoi inscription found near Tsetserleg City (Vovin 2018). Para-Mongolic borrowings also appear to exist in Manchu as well as in some Turkic languages.



at least geographically be a possible donor source into Tocharian (note that Tungusic words are also found borrowed into Samoyedic and other Uralic languages further to the west), in particular since the word is also found in the Mongolic and Turkic languages. Second, was Proto-Tungusic, or some close progenitor (i.e. para-Tungusic), contemporary with Tocharian B and would borrowing therefore chronologically be possible? The answer to this second question is, yes, since Tocharian B is attested as late as during the 6th to 8th centuries AD (and probably even later, as mentioned above), and while most estimates of Proto-Tungusic place it at some time between the 5th century BC and the 5th century AD, although the area of original settlement is still to be considered a matter of controversy (Central or Northern Manchuria versus Zabaikal'e and so on).

An important argument for the Turkic forms being of Mongolic origin is that there already is, supposedly, an original “Altaic” root in Turkic related to the Mongolic form. A related Proto-Turkic root has been reconstructed with **āf* ‘немного = few, a little’ (=barely), which is attested in practically all Turkic languages, for example Old Turkish *az*, Turkish *az*, Kyrgyz *az*, Tuvan *as*, etc. (EDT 277; VEWT 32; ЭСТЯ 1 93–94), although this early form is curiously altogether missing in Yakut and Dolgan. This Turkic root supposedly completes the triad with the Mongolic and Tungusic forms, and if actually genetically related one could envisage, once upon a time, **arai* > **āri* > **āf* on the Turkic side. This is made very convincing by the apparent existence of Early Chuvash **ɔr* ‘small, little’ (~ Common Turkic **az* ‘a little’), borrowed as the **or* ‘small’ in Meadow Mari *or-jylme* ‘язычок’ and *or-lúdo* ‘утка-чирок = teal duck’ (as noted already by Paasonen 1928), as well as Mountain Mari *ar-yeč* ‘чирок = teal, lit. small bird’ (< Chuvash *kajvč* ‘bird’) (as pointed out to me by A. Savelyev). The Modern Chuvash word for ‘small’, however is *pəčək*, which is generally considered a Mongolic borrowing. Then, there is Khalaj *hāz* ‘few, little’, another extreme Turkic outlier, but here the form is most similar to that of the other Turkic languages (except for the root-initial *h-* of course, lacking in all other Turkic languages; I agree with some other researchers (Jankowski 2017: 471), that the root-initial *h-* in Khalaj may be prothetic under the influence of the Iranian languages, and not at all reflect an archaic Turkic feature, as Doerfer originally suggested), and the Khalaj form is thus not particularly informative.

This hypothesis would leave some room for the “Mongolic origin” as borrowings into the other language groups and languages as presented in this paper. However, I suspect, given that this root is much more widespread than believed earlier, a much more ancient origin for this root as an early *Wanderwort*, which developed secondary meanings only in a few places, meanings that were subsequently borrowed also into the neighboring languages that had this root. It is unclear, without further studies of individual Turkic, Mongolic, Tungusic, Tocharian languages, etc., if the word entered already at the proto-language stage or only into later languages. In a few cases, late borrowings were no doubt independently made into languages which did not have this root at all, then only taking on the meaning of the donor language, or even a limited version of it due to semantic narrowing. This would actually explain the lack of certain meaning in a few languages or groups of languages, for example the interjective use. The interjective use could be a specific Tungusic creation (unless it originated in Japanese, Korean or a Chinese language), borrowed into many languages, notwithstanding the Turkic and Mongolic branches, which seemingly have ran their own course of meanings (which is why it is difficult to connect all the languages in the semantic tree above). At any rate, the Turkic, Tungusic and Mongolic forms of this root – basically of the three core languages which have transmitted this root to other far-away languages – are in some way all connected to each other phonologically and semantically, even if semantic change makes this fact obscure.



6. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Some further details regarding the phonological form and semantics of the interjection presented in this paper, meaning 'oh!' may be discussed. Interjections are generally considered in linguistics to be descriptively ineffable, making analyses difficult. The general interjection 'oh!', which the *Wanderwort* ***araj** signifies, as found in many languages, serves many purposes, including being an expression of *surprise, amazement, awe, affirmation, realization, being annoyed, afterthought, pain, skepticism*, as well as having a *vocative* function or being an *exclamation* for drama or emphasis. Interjections of surprise may often arise as natural expressive syntax such as 'oh!', 'hmm', 'pah!', 'yay!', etc., but an interjection of the disyllabic phonological form 'araj' does not seem part of such a scheme as interjections often reflect sound symbolism and ideophones. This sort of borrowing cannot be due to cultural or economic reasons, and borrowing of an interjection due to cultural diffusion would be unexpected, but perhaps as an acculturation term from a spreading language (perhaps in this case simultaneously spreading Turkic, Tungusic and Mongolic). Could it originally have arisen from a specific meaning in mind? Meaning that the interjective use is semantically secondary? This specific meaning may be evident with the other meaning of 'suddenly', as a *surprise*, perhaps even having arisen due to common hunting, leading to an *interjection*, often arises from *sudden*, unexpected occurrences, but this semantical question is difficult.

However, one should also note that there are Irish *ara!* 'interjection: ah! No! so! Indeed!', which has an alternative form of *arú*, as well as Maori *ara* 'interjection of surprise' (Biggs 2013). This Irish and Maori form, of course, can have no connection to this root dealt as a *Wanderwort* in this paper, but it could show us that the interjective use in the Asian lands has evolved naturally in man's speech, without any particular meaning in mind. Further, there is Tibetan *ran* 'spontaneously, on one's own accord', which is similar both phonologically and semantically to the *Wanderwort* at hand, but the similarities are most likely only coincidental. In any case, this is a very widely distributed and attested root seemingly going back to the dawn of man. We appear to be able to geographically delimit this *Wanderwort* to at least as far as Iñupiatun in the east, Moghol in the south, and Kalmuck and Chuvash in the west, again suggesting that these are borrowings. In fairly high likelihood this root is also to be found in other languages and dialects in eastern Asia beyond those discussed in this paper. In other words, the encompassing geographical area of this historical wandering root is truly huge.

ABBREVIATIONS

EDAL = STAROSTIN, DYBO and MUDRAK 2003.

EDT = CLAUSON 1972.

ЭСТЯ = SEVORTJAN 1974–2000.

JRS = SLEPTSOV 1972.

Лексика = ТЕНИШЕВ 1997.

SIGTJA 2006 = ТЕНИШЕВ / ДЫБО 2006.

TMN = DOERFER 1963–1967.

TMS 1 = CINTSIUS 1975.

VEWT = RÄSÄNEN 1969.



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