NOTE ON SOME OLD TURKIC WORDS

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As a Turkolog of having studied the Qazaq language for more than 20 years (1952–1975), in the following I will give some notes on several Old Turkic words connected with the Qazaq language.

Key words: Old Turkic, Qazaq qid-, ḫlp, kiyeli, ḫyar.

qid-

After attending the 4th International Congress of Turkic Languages held in Izmir, Turkey in 2000, I went to Ankara and visited Türk Dil Kurumu (Society of Turk Language). There Prof. A. B. Ercilasun gave me some volumes of Yearbook of Turkic Studies Belleten. In the volume of 1993 (Published in 1995), I read his excellent paper ‘Bir kişi Yanılsar Oyuşi Bodun Bişükıne Tegi Kidmaz Ermiş (KT, G6 = BK, K4) Ibaresi Üzerine’.¹ In this article he widely discussed the verb qid- with the noun qidiy ‘edge, border, limit’ saying that “… qid- fiiline herhangi bir şeye kıyı, kenar, sınırlar, hudut yapmak anlamını verebiliriz. Bu anlamı metnimize tatbik edersek, şu sonuç ederiz: Bir kişi yanılsa, kabilesine, milletine, evine, eşiye kadar kıyı yapmazmıš’. According to my opinion, his viewpoint still does not hit the mark (I would not discuss the words ev, ešík in his translation).

We must say that in the past century many Turcologists wrongly understood and translated this verb. For example, Thomsen (1896, p. 116.): “Si un homme tombait en faute, ils ne s’avançaient pas jusqu’à de sa race et de son.” Here, Thomsen wrongly translated qidmaz as ‘(not) advance, (not) go forward’. In his German translation the sentence was translated basically the same like in the French: “und selbst

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¹ For technical reasons I changed some Turkish letters into International Turcological letters.
² Published in ZDMG 78 (1924), p. 141.
wenn ein Mann (von uns) abfiel — die Besonnenen innerhalb seines Geschlechtes oder seines Volkes auf Abwege zu bringen, haben sie doch nicht erreicht.”

I have not seen any of Radloff’s translations (1894, 1895, 1897). Here I quote Radloff’s German translation from Thomsen’s above-mentioned French book (p. 168): “(selbst) der sich irrende Mensch wagt sich nicht an die Ehre (den Schmuck) ihrer Weisen und ihres Volkes”. Radloff translated the verb as ‘dare not’.

S. E. Malov’s translation is as follows: “No éslı (otdel’nye lica) iz tjurkov (i soblaznjalis’), to celye rody (daže) do svojstvennikov (do bračnogo rodstva) ne otklonjalis’” (Malov 1951, Tekst: str. 28. Perevod: str. 34).

That Malov translated the word qid- as ‘deviate’ is not correct either.

H. N. Orkun’s translation is: “Bir kişi yanılsa soyu, kavmî, bişükine (?) kadar ilerlemez imişi” (Orkun 1987, p. 25).

Here it seems to me he made translation from Thomsen’s French version.

Prof. Talat Tekin in his book A Grammar of Orkhan Turkic read it as iqidmez and translated as ‘to give shelter’ (Tekin 1968, pp. 231, 262). This is a too-far-fetched idea.

In the same author’s book Orhon Yaztlari (Tekin 1988, p. 4) he transcribed it as qidiqmaz and translated into modern Turkish as “bir kişi suç išlese, onun boyu(na), halkı(na) (ve) hişım akrabasına kadar (herkesi) öldürmezler ermişi”.

Here people cannot understand what the phrase öldürmezler ermişi ‘they did not kill’ means. It does not conform logically to the context. In his new book Orkhan Türkçesi Grameri (Tekin 2000, p. 219) he transcribed the text as bir kişi yanılsar, wuši bodunî bišükina tâgi kîdmaz ârmiš, but there was no translation. Only in the glossary the author translated the verb qid- as ‘kîymak, öldürmek’. From the translation ‘öldürmek’ (to kill) we could conclude that the meaning of the verb ‘kîymak’ is a synonym of ‘öldürmek’ or is near to the latter in the meaning.

Prof. Mahârrem Ergin in his Orhon Abideleri (Ergin 1970, p. 2) translated this sentence as ‘Bir insan yanılsa, kabilesi, milleti, akrabasına kadar barındırırmazmîs’. Here, I guess that under the influence of T. Tekin’s above-mentioned English book, he wrongly translated it as ‘did not let (them) take shelter’.

In order to save place, I would not quote the opinions of Prof. A. von Gabain and S. Çagatay about this problem. According to the historic law of Turkic phonetics, qid- corresponds to Qazaq qû- (like qod- > qov- ‘to put, kad- > kû- ‘to wear’, etc.). From the viewpoint of Qazaq language, the meaning of the verb qû- is very clear. Among other meanings it also means ‘to grudge, to take pity on’. So we could translate the whole sentence as ‘when one person made error, they did not even take pity on his clan and people right down to (infants in) the cradle’.

älp

In the 1950s when I read the story about the hungry tiger in the famous Buddhist scripture Altun Yaruq in Prof. Malov’s book (Malov 1951, p. 181), I found he gave a wrong translation for the following sentence: ‘(ay, inim,) älp titgülük tawar älp is

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nāng incıp istg özätä ärtmäz’ (O brat moj! Geroj – kō žertvuet svoim bogatstvom, gerojskoe ēto delo (v otnošenii bogatstva), no ēto ne to, čto rasstat’sja so svoej žiz−n’ju.) I do not have Radloff’s German translation – published in 1930 – at my hand. I think Malov might have followed his translation. Malov understood the word ālp only as ‘hero’.

As we know, the Uighur version of Altun Yaruq was translated from Yi-Jing’s Chinese version. The Chinese original here is ‘一切难舍无过已身’ yiqie nan she wu guo ji shen’. The English translation of Chinese original is: ‘From all difficult (things) to give up, no one exceeds giving up one’s own body’. Prof. J. Nobel’s German translation is correct: ‘Vom allem, was schwer himzugeben ist, geht keines über die Hingabe des eigenen Körpers hinaus’ (Nobel 1958, p. 337).

So, we should translate this Uighur sentence into English like this: ‘(Ay, my young brother), (in the world) the difficult thing to abandon and the difficult matter to do is nothing more than giving up (our) own body.

In modern Qazaq the words alip, alpawit have the same etymology like ālp.

kiyeli

This Qazaq word means ‘holy, sacred’. It comes from the Old Turkic ‘küügäilig’. According to the historical law of Turkic phonetic development, the -g- between two vowels changes to -y-, e.g. igä > iye ‘owner’, tügä > tüyä ‘camel’. The adjective suffix -li < -lig. But I cannot give a satisfactory explanation on the change üü > i. The adjective/noun küügäilig is a word of common use in old Turkic books. Prof. P. Zieme translates it as ‘Wunderbares Kommen, Zauberkräfte’ (= Sanskrit rddipāda = Chinese 神通 shentong) (Zieme 1996, p. 220).

In Altun Yaruq this word appears many times. But in Ceval Kaya’s new edition (1996) of this work he does not recognise this word, wrongly dividing it to two words: kuo and kälig without translation. When I compared the Uighur text with the Chinese original as well as with Nobel’s German translation, I found that beside the above-mentioned meanings it also has the meaning ‘Majestät’ corresponding to Chinese 威力 weili (power, might).

Generally speaking, Qazaq language still keeps some old Turkic lexical elements, e.g. iygi < ädgü ‘good’ used in constructing a kind of optative voice (körsevgi edim ‘if only I would see’), izgi ‘good’ < ädgü/äzgü (izgi would be a loan word from a z-Turkic language like Hakas or Sarigh Uighur), iyis < OT idi- ‘to smell’ + verb-noun suffix -s. Last but not least I would mention that when I was young, in Sinjiang I always heard Qazaq people say a phrase âyar körsetiw ‘to threaten’. The word âyar already appeared more than thousand years ago in Kül Tegin’s inscription East 29-line: … âyar elligdâ [âyar qayânlyda veg qiltim]. I translate this sentence as ‘I made them (live) better than the people who have strong countries and strong khanates’. But it is a pity that I cannot find this word in the Qazaq dictionaries published in


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China and elsewhere. (After I had finished this paper I was happy to find this word in Prof. v. Gabain’s article ‘Irano-Turkic relation in the late Sasanian period’ (Gabain 1983, p. 623. ighet ‘strong’ < Sogdian ygh’r).

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